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THE DEATH OF GIRLHOOD

The Message of Jessica Dubroff's Cap

by Wendy Shalit

Dole in Trouble
WILLIAM KRISTOL

Public-Relations Scaremonger
MATT LABASH

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2 SCRAPBOOK
A Clinton lie; popcorn follies; the Rental List; and more.

4 CASUAL
You want book proposals? David Brooks has got 'em.

6 CORRESPONDENCE

9 EDITORIAL
On Partial-Birth Abortion

11 MAXIMUM MELTDOWN
Republicans flinch on the minimum wage *by* **Fred Barnes**

12 A REPUBLICAN MSA-BOMB
Politics and the medical savings account. *by* **Matthew Rees**

13 PULITZER POLITICS
How Dorothy Rabinowitz got the shaft. *by* **Tucker Carlson**

15 AUDIT HELL
The IRS plays rough. *by* **Stephen Moore and Dan Pilla**

16 DAVID IFSHIN'S JOURNEY
The life of a New Democrat. *by* **Morton M. Kondracke**

40 PARODY

Cover art by Kevin Chadwick

19 THE DEATH OF GIRLHOOD
The meaning of an airplane crash—and the slogan on a cap. *by* **Wendy Shalit**

22 A DOLE DEFEAT AND CONSERVATISM
Bob Dole may not make it, but conservatism need not fail. *by* **William Kristol**

24 SCAREMONGER
David Fenton, enviro leftist, weaves and deceives with phony science. *by* **Matt Labash**

MEDIA
30 *PEOPLE* AND ADULTERY — The taint on a magazine's "greatest love stories." *by* **Jay Nordlinger**
32 100 YEARS OF TURPITUDE — The *New York Times* celebrates an anniversary. *by* **Philip Terzian**

BOOKS
34 ENEMIES OF MARRIAGE — The multifarious costs of a culture of divorce. *by* **Claudia Winkler**

MOVIES
35 TOO-PLAIN JANE — Franco Zeffirelli shortchanges Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. *by* **John Podhoretz**

SPORTS
37 SECOND CHANCES — What baseball can do for the persistent and willing. *by* **Carl M. Cannon**

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An Abject Lie, Exposed as Truth

Early in 1993, Gen. Barry McCaffrey, now the administration's drug czar but then an assistant to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was exiting the White House through the southwest gate. He encountered a Clinton staffer, young and female. "Good morning," he said. "I don't talk to the military," she snapped.

McCaffrey told some colleagues about the incident, and soon it made its way into the press. Questioned about it after a speech at the U.S. Naval Academy, Clinton denounced reports of the snub as an "abject lie," "made up out of whole cloth." Those repeating the story "should be ashamed of themselves," he declared. Later, though, the *Washington Post* confirmed the story, and Clinton jogged with McCaffrey, offered him a promotion, and generally made nice.

In *Madhouse*, a forthcoming book about the administration, Jeffrey Birnbaum reports that then-press secretary Dee Dee Myers "sought [McCaffrey] out and discussed the problem." Moreover, "Myers also gave McCaffrey's daughter a job in her office over the summer," "to help make amends." "Both actions," Birnbaum writes, "helped repair troubled relations between the White House and the Pentagon."

As the administration now moves between hardcovers, the anti-military ugliness of the still-protected Clintonite has been amply confirmed (not only by Birnbaum, but also by Elizabeth Drew in her book on the White House) and is no "abject lie."

Once again, when it comes to Bill Clinton's defending himself and his administration, the first casualty appears to be the truth.

Madonna with Child

Sean Delonas/New York Post

Orville Reddenbacher Wins!

At long last, Beltway comeuppance for the Health Nazis! Two years ago, the Center for Science in the Public Interest gave us the scare that rocked Reddenbacher by claiming "theater popcorn ought to be the Snow White of snacks, but instead it's the Godzilla." Having since done similar takeouts on nearly everything that can be ingested, the Center had us believing at the time that our fatty hearts were about to stop beating in our greasy chest cavities, because a medium bag of buttered popcorn had the same artery-clogging potential as a bacon-and-eggs breakfast, steak dinner, and Big Mac and large fries combined. Well, now a popcorn bill has come down the pike. And it's just what all nonprofiteer scare-scientists want, right? Wrong.

The new farm bill, recently signed into law by the president, actually features a paragraph on the stuff. "Popcorn," it states, "is an important food that is a valuable part of the human diet." Better still, it "plays a significant role in the economy of the United States" and therefore "must be of high quality, readily available, handled properly and marketed efficiently to ensure that the benefits of popcorn are available to the people of the United States." Said marketing will be enforced by a "Popcorn Board that shall consist of not fewer than 4 members and not more than 9 members."

Of the bill, the popcorn-hating Michael Jacobson of the Center for Science in the Public Interest says, "It's an idiotic provision. It's ridiculous that Congress is carrying water for popcorn farmers when there are so many other important things to worry about." Like how chimichangas are clogging up our arteries.

Affirmative Unpopularity

The Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati has released some polling data on affirmative action that bode ill for Bill Clinton in November. Researchers who analyzed national surveys between 1986

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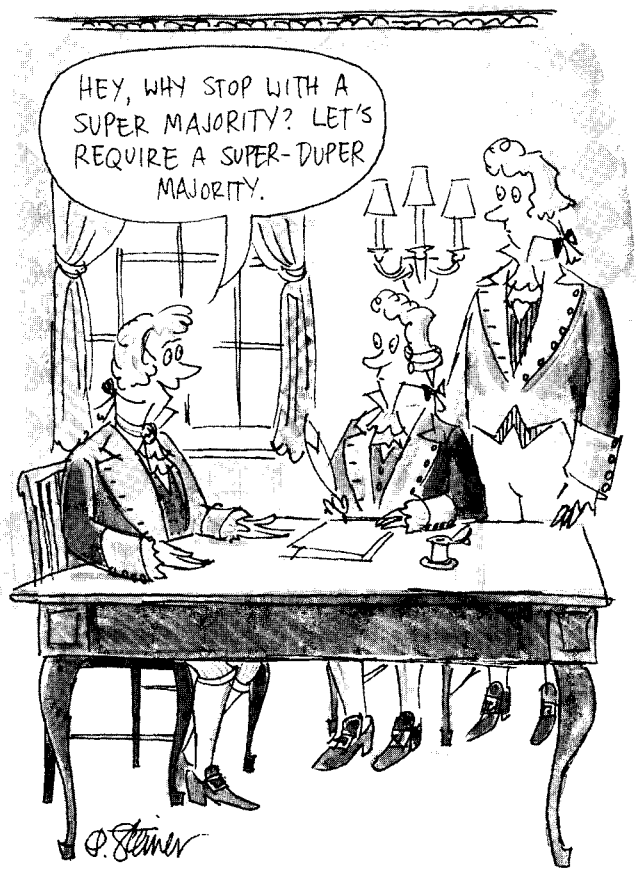

and 1994 and Ohio statewide surveys from 1995 and 1996 concluded that "candidates who favor racial preferences may fare poorly at the polls. For that reason, Democratic politicians might be well-advised to avoid a campaign fought on racial preferences." Among whites in Ohio, 79 percent opposed racial preferences in hiring and promotion—55 percent "strongly," while 24 percent either opposed preferences "not strongly" or "leaned toward opposing" them. Among black Ohioans, 49 percent favored preferences; 41 percent opposed them. And while 44 percent of swing voters in Ohio said affirmative action would not affect their vote, "significantly more of the remaining swing voters say they would vote against [a pro-racial-preference] candidate than would vote for her/him (35 percent to 21 percent)."

Nationally, fully 58 percent of white *Democrats* "strongly" oppose racial preferences in the workplace. So do 74 percent of Republicans and 66 percent of independents. Researchers also analyzed whether "racism explains whites' opinions about affirmative action." They found that even a "large portion of those most committed to egalitarianism still oppose racial preferences in the marketplace." Forty-five percent of self-described "very egalitarian" whites "strongly" oppose such preferences, as do 60 percent of "slightly egalitarian" whites. Seems it's not just bigots from the far-right fringe who've had their fill of quotas.

The Rental List

The Reading List has been, with a few breaks, going for 32 weeks now, a total of 110 masterpieces commended to the attention of this magazine's audience. That is eight more than the 102 Great Books commended to the attention of the literate by those two University of Chicago listing maniacs, Robert Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer Adler. The Reading List discovered last week, to its horror, that it had begun mentioning works previously recommended, which is doubtless necessary, as its effort to keep the focus largely on the best that has been thought and said leaves relatively little room to maneuver. We would fear beginning to dip into types like Hemingway or Steinbeck—those considered valuable or invaluable in their own recent lifetimes but now reduced to their actual, deeply minor stature. (Note to the late F. Scott Fitzgerald: Looks like you're going to make it, and Ernie isn't!)

So, in an effort to offer a little more variety, and to avoid scraping the bottom of the literary barrel, the Reading List will turn over this space on a rotating basis to the Rental List. The Rental List will offer you little-known but worthwhile titles to look for in your local video store. The Rental List avoids the obvious, seeking obscurity instead. This week, three films about one of the Rental List's favorite subjects, rich people:

Just Tell Me What You Want, starring Alan King and Ali McGraw, 1981. This admittedly foul-mouthed comedy about a tycoon and his disenchanted mistress is one of the best-written American movies and survives even McGraw's awful performance. Jay Presson Allen's screenplay manages to wring humor even out of cremation.

Easy Living, starring Jean Arthur, 1937. A sable coat falls from a Fifth Avenue apartment onto the head of a working girl, who finds herself thrust into high society. Another great screenplay, this one by Preston Sturges, features one of the most hilarious scenes in screwball comedy: a food fight at the Automat.

White Mischief, starring Joss Ackland, 1987. The true story of a murder in colonial Kenya, circa 1940. Rarely has wealthy indolence ever gotten such a cool-eyed treatment, as when Sarah Miles looks out upon a pristine morning and moans, "Another f—g beautiful day."

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Casual

THIS WOULD MAKE A GREAT BOOK

Some people write books. But I am pioneering a new, miniaturist form of literary production. I write book proposals. Dozens of them.

An idea for a book, which seems brilliant at the time, will pop into my head. I'll rush to the computer and sketch out my dramatic thesis, which will revolutionize the way we see our world and put me on the bestseller list. Then I'll start sketching out the chapters.

Now, an actual book chapter takes months to write, but when I'm in book-proposal frenzy I can sketch out several chapters in seconds. I'll envision the great troves of research I'm going to do to back up my thesis, and the magnificent wisdom I'll attain. When writing a proposal it's important to convey the impression that you will, at some future date, come up with brilliant new concepts to flesh out your thesis. Coming up with the actual ideas themselves takes time and effort and has to be put off to the book-writing stage.

It should be emphasized that I don't actually send these proposals out to a literary agent or to publishers. In the fullness of time I usually find that my 600-page-book idea can barely sustain a 3,000-word article. But that doesn't make the proposal less valid as an art form. There are plenty of architects who have never actually had a building of their own design constructed but who are considered influential architects nonetheless.

I've written a book proposal called "The Triumph of Belgian Cultural Hegemony," on all the things that make modern life boring. I wrote one on "The Overclass" two years before *Newsweek* put the concept on its cover. I dashed off another on "Nadaphrenia," profiles of prominent people who, unlike schizophrenics with their multiple personalities, have no personality whatsoever. I've done a proposal for a self-help book, "The Fine Art of False Modesty," and an exposé, "Multilateral Man," a savage look at life inside multilateral organizations.

A few months ago I drafted a proposal for a book called "Empires: History's Golden Ages and Our Own." It would be a comparison of four nations in their primes. I figured I'd start the book by reviewing the classic literature on what makes nations great. Gibbon thought it was a sudden increase in liberty. Machiavelli thought artistic genius followed military might.

Then there would be four essays on specific nations. Contemporary America would be one, since the idea is to compare our Golden Age with the others. And then, I pondered, I'd throw in Renaissance Florence, the Dutch Republic, and Victorian England. But maybe, I reconsidered, I should toss out the Dutch Republic and do a chapter on Imperial Rome. Or perhaps Rome is too distant and I should focus on France during the time of Louis XIV.

As I'm tossing empires in and out of my book, it may occur to you that in order to write about these empires I would actually have to possess immense knowledge about them. Me tossing empires in and out of a book is like the manager of the San Diego Padres tossing Barry Bonds and Ken Griffey around in his batting order, even though they are not really on his team. But that is the beauty of the book proposal. Lack of in-depth knowledge is no bar to conceptualization.

The book-proposal genre I'm developing is not the same as the book-proposal genre publishers like. They prefer proposals featuring a sample chapter and a table of contents. Like Raphael, I am playing much more radically with perspective. My proposals do not feature deep perspectives; they are more in the nature of overviews, and thus are characterized more by breadth.

As a journalist, I write mainly on topics pegged to the here and now. But my book concepts tend to escape temporal bonds and narrow specialization. A colleague had a professor who wrote a promising book while he was a young man. Then decades passed, and his next book never appeared. When asked what was the subject of this long delayed work, he would say, "The World in All Its Aspects." That's about the breadth I'm looking for in my book proposals.

Reinhold Neibuhr wrote a book called *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. Denis de Rougement wrote a book called *Love in the Western World*. William Barrett wrote a book called *The Death of the Soul*. These are the kind of monster topics that are perfect for my proposals.

Perhaps I could just take the many proposals I've done and put them together in an anthology. In fact, I've got a few ideas about how to organize them, how to frame the collection with a brilliant introduction. I'm convinced it would make a great book.

DAVID BROOKS

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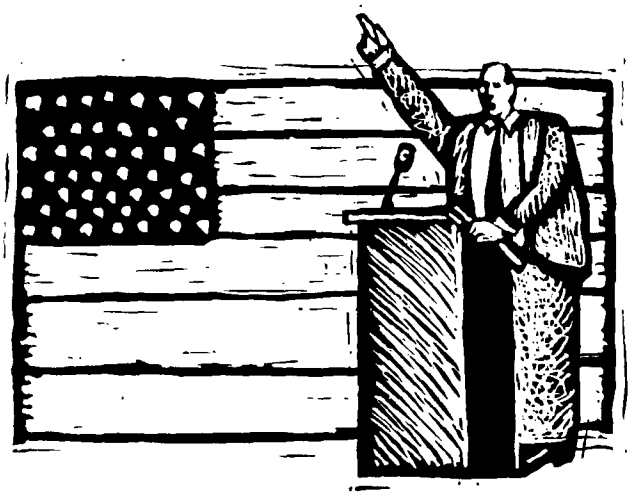
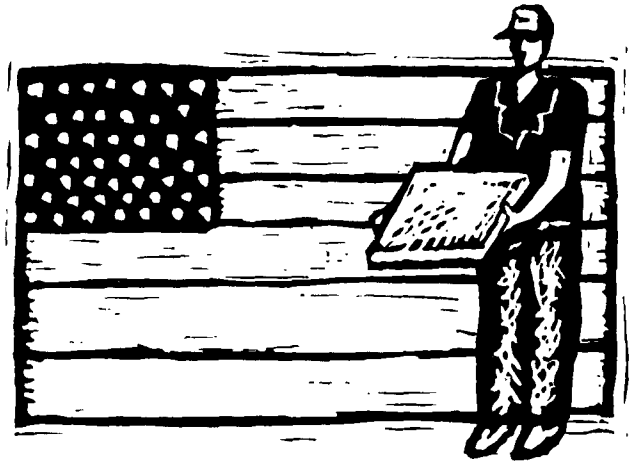


Everyone *says* they want to change the way Washington works.

The only question then becomes...



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THE LAND OF THE HYPER-ENTERTAINED

I anticipated something very different from Michael Anton's "The Hyper-Entertaining of America" (April 15). The development of a very important subject was not there.

"The likes of Louis B. Mayer and Jack L. Warner," as Anton refers to them, did not force "their fascination with manor-house dinner parties and mahogany speedboats" on an unresponsive public and, by implication, wind up terrible business failures. I would be astonished if Anton could name 10 pictures that were produced by MGM in the 30s.

The output was of infinite variety. The public ate it up, its entertainment value was strong enough to pull 80 million to 90 million people out of their houses once a week for many years, and it made Mayer, Warner, and a whole lot of other people very well-to-do.

That particular public would have been bored, and probably repelled, out of its socks by the dinosaurs of today. And, by the way, there were plenty of car chases. But inside the cars were characters the viewer cared about.

ELEANOR SHAUGHNESSY
BRATTLEBORO, VT

Michael Anton's observations on our culture of "hyper-entertainment" are accurate but hardly new. The phenomenon is brilliantly outlined in Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*; Anton's point about Walkmans was made by Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind*; and George Bernard Shaw, early in this century, said of the impressive glow of lights in Times Square, "It must be beautiful, when one cannot read."

The difference is, Anton doesn't care. He celebrates our incessant bombardment by chunks of art-product—disconnected, content-deprived, easily forgettable, yet ever-diverting—as the "first truly popular culture in human history."

In the next sentence, he refutes this statement by invoking the pop culture that "in every time" has been "loud,. . . high-spirited, ignorant, exuberant, and annoying."

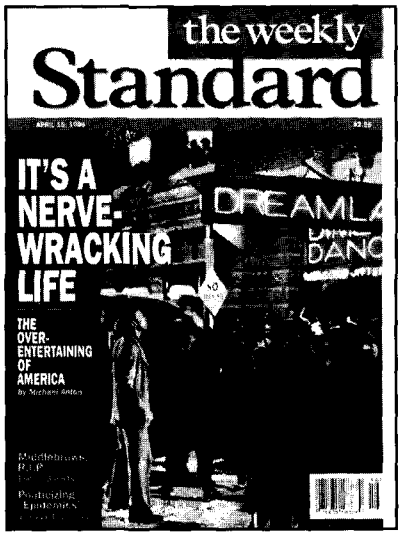
Is this over-entertaining new or ancient? He seems to be a victim of the shattered epistemology that he believes is "no problem."

GLEN HOCHKEPPEL
LEESBURG, VA

MIDDLEBROW *ZEITGEIST*

David Brooks's "The Importance of Being Earnest" (April 15) is absolutely the best explication I have ever read on our *Zeitgeist* conundrums. Some people write books; Brooks manages his task quite effectively in an essay.

The relevance of his analysis to current cultural and political issues is apparent by reading the rest of the magazine.



John Podhoretz laments the middlebrowing of Las Vegas ("Vegas Needs Hookers," April 15) on the grounds that gambling, perhaps like pornography, should be marginalized so as to keep its physical manifestations in conformance with its proper place in our mental life. On the other hand, Michael Anton describes the dumbing down of middlebrow even further, concluding that the hyper-entertaining process is inevitable.

I differ with Brooks only on the reason that irony reigns supreme as the era's dominant mode of expression and understanding.

It just doesn't ring true that highbrow "did in" middlebrow out of envy, embarrassment, or spite. That would be attributing too much power to the highbrow class, which was already on the way out.

I suspect it has to do with a more complex web of issues. Following Anton's reasoning, the increasing efficiency of capitalism in delivering cultural product may simply require ever-escalating levels of Joseph Schumpeter's "creative destruction," with irony employed as the dynamite.

JEFFREY APFEL
NEWTON, MA

THROW THE ROOKIES OUT

Matthew Rees's tribute to the four freshman Republican representatives who were responsible for defeating badly needed, meaningful immigration reform is way off base ("Rookies of the Year," April 15).

First, Rees admits that the bill's sponsors, Lamar Smith and Alan Simpson, "had public opinion on their side." Second, the author states that the four representatives worked closely with Democrats in Congress and the AFL-CIO, avowed foes of Republican conservatism. Finally, Rees says that three of the representatives come from "districts with small immigrant communities," and the fourth is from a state where "immigration [does not] generate much passion."

These so-called heroes have done a tremendous disservice not only to their party but also to the American people, particularly those who live in states where immigration does generate a lot of passion. I hope that these traitorous Republicans will get what they deserve in the fall of 1996, when the voters return them to the private sector.

DAVID INGLIS
LOMA LINDA, CA

FIGHTING ABOUT JUDGES

I was pleased to see that you have joined the Alliance for Justice in asking for a national conversation about the appointment of federal judges ("Let's Have a Fight About Judges," April 15).

It came as a surprise, however, to read that the Alliance has backed off of our longstanding commitment to such debates. By taking a quote of mine out

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of context, you suggest that the Alliance has somehow changed its view on the appropriateness of public discussions about the role of the courts and the men and women on the bench.

To the contrary, the Alliance sees its role as ensuring that the public, along with the Senate, is fully informed about the records of judicial nominees. What we object to, and what I was referring to as "a threat to judicial independence," is the bringing of direct political pressure on judges to rule in a specific way.

This is what happened when President Clinton's press secretary, Mike McCurry, called for Judge Baer's resignation and when Sen. Orrin Hatch took credit for Judge Baer's changing his ruling.

Historically, we saw such threats to the judiciary when powerful segregationists attacked southern judges over their courageous rulings in desegregation cases and when members of Congress sought the impeachment of Justice William O. Douglas because of his liberal rulings.

Let's have a fight, in the context of confirmation hearings or elections or in the press. But let's agree that such a debate should not involve pressuring judges to make specific rulings, a trend that is nothing less than a threat to the constitutional role of the judiciary.

NAN ARON
PRESIDENT, ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, DC

THE EDITORS RESPOND: ***Ms. Aron's quotation ("There's no reason for the administration to engage in a discussion that is such a threat to judicial independence") appeared in a recent*** **New York Times** ***"news analysis" of partisan conflict over judicial appointments generally, not over Judge Baer's specific ruling. It was in that same context that we cited her words. We're pleased to correct the record and delighted that the Alliance for Justice believes federal judgeships are a legitimate and necessary subject for political debate.***

DOCTORS, GUNS, AND POLITICS

Bravo! Tucker Carlson's article "Handgun Control, M.D." (April 15) hits the nail on the head. Carlson exposes those in the medical community who treat gun violence as a public health issue. These attempts by doctors are just pure political posturing to ban guns.

Conservatives should realize that the right of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms is, and must continue to be, a bedrock principle in the conservative philosophy. We are starkly reminded of that point when the Centers for Disease Control use taxpayer dollars to conclude that restricting the Second Amendment rights of citizens is the only answer to gun violence.

GLEN A. CAROLINE
CENTREVILLE, VA

The Butcher of Dunblane had never been arrested before he killed 16 children. Neither had College Republican Robert Harwood, who shot to death another College Republican, Rex Chao, on the campus of Johns Hopkins University.

The doctors waging war on firearms violence as a preventable disease are sitting ducks. But they are trying in their philosophically occluded way to save lives. I should like to know what the new conservatism is doing toward the same goal.

Gun violence is like racial segregation circa 1950. All deplore it, none knows what to do about it. Reformers expose themselves to the ridicule of the smug.

Many of the ideological forebears of THE WEEKLY STANDARD were quite content with the southern solution to the Negro problem.

Your readers might want to consider this: The values of family, community, and country, all of which commend a person to loyalties greater than he, are in a certain tension with the precious right of the individual to bear arms.

HAL RIEDL
BALTIMORE, MD

MANHATTAN PROJECT OUTING

In their article "Outed from the Cold" (April 15), John Haynes and Harvey Klehr say that Theodore Hall, who graduated from Harvard in 1944 at age 19, is 76 today. Actually, Hall will turn 71 this coming October 20.

The Venona files show that the Manhattan Project, at which I was a physicist, was more deeply penetrated than Haynes and Klehr write. Recently, in speaking with one of the Project's wartime security officers about Venona, he, seemingly depressed, said, "It only shows how bad a job I did."

He was not the sole person to blame. It shows how naive many eminent personalities, in government and out, remained for a half-century. Will they be "outed"?

ARNOLD KRAMISH
RESTON, VA

LANGUAGE OF PUNISHMENT

William Tucker makes a critical point which should be emblazoned everywhere: When the punishment for murder—median time only eight years—is just slightly more than that for rape—five years—or even robbery—three years—then we are encouraging criminals to murder and rob other victims ("Punishment Is a Language," April 8). Dead victims can't identify criminals. By going light on murderers, we are encouraging their behavior.

There's another horrendous cost. Police and prosecutors, already demoralized by daunting odds against the capture, trial, and conviction of criminals, are further discouraged by the system's penalty structure which mocks law enforcement in many additional ways, e.g., early release due to prison overcrowding.

Please keep pounding away at this subject. We're losing the war against crime, and many Americans are blithely unaware.

DAVID GOODWIN
MIAMI, FL

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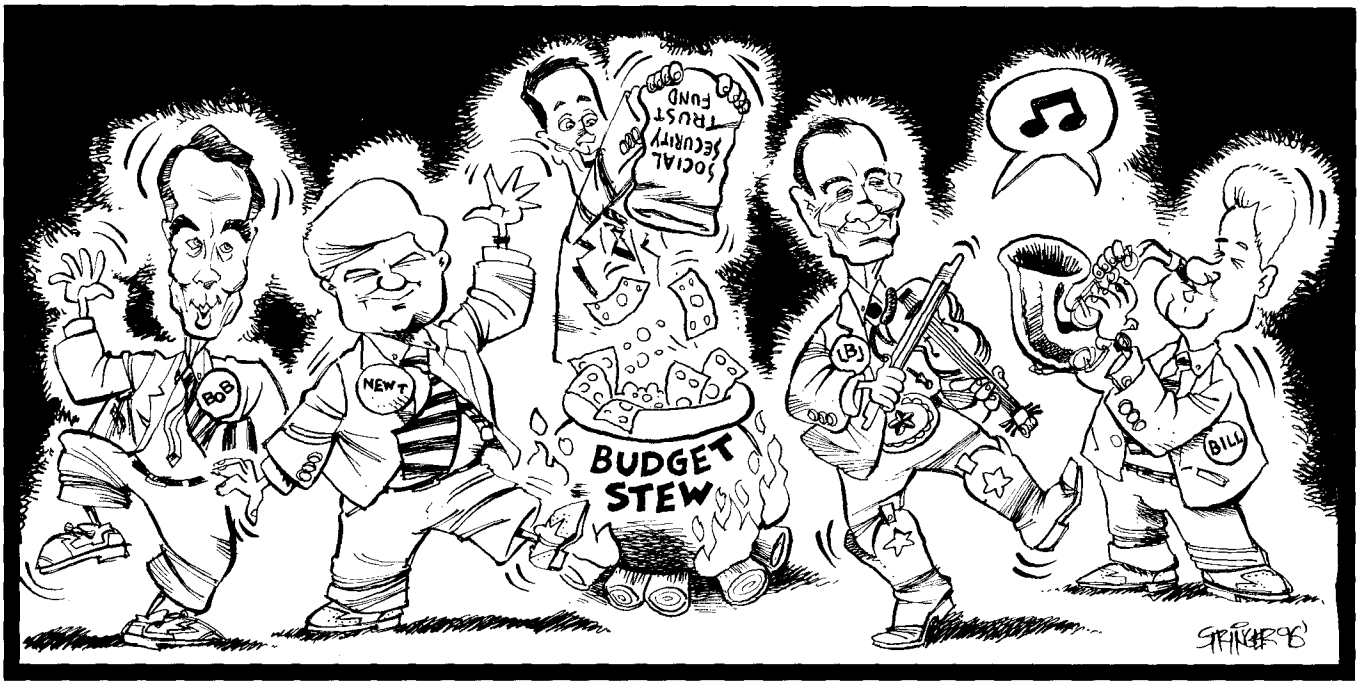

Today's leaders dance to LBJ's tune as America's trust funds boil away.

With all this talk about tax reform and generous deductions for the poor, Congress is not being honest with the American people. The truth is nearly 40 percent of Americans are "exempted" from income tax, despite all the hot air from Washington crying for their protection. This hot air is cause enough for global warning; it certainly prevents honest tax relief. The real burden for this group, no matter the size of their income, is the Social Security payroll tax. No generous deductions here. Neither raising income taxes on the rich nor moving to a flat tax will do anything to provide *payroll* tax relief for the working poor.

LBJ still calls the tune.

To hide the cost of the Viet Nam war, LBJ pooled all our independent trust funds into one giant pot. Because a stew obscures its exact ingredients, this *budget* stew became the *tax-raising* tool of choice for government, without ever using those dirty words. Over the past 10 years, payroll tax rates are up by more than 50 percent with revenues more than doubled, yet the trust funds are on the verge of bankruptcy again. Recent government shutdowns illustrate how the treasury can take money from one "trust" fund and transfer it to another with impunity. Such activity would be criminal in the corporate world, but not in Washington.

Trust fund reform is the right wine for a tax reform entrée.

Let's face it. If you are under 55, you have a greater chance of being abducted by aliens than ever seeing your first Social Security check, under today's terms and conditions. As long as all the trust funds can be commingled at will, for political purposes, our future will not have the comfort our parents enjoy. All that awaits our children are historical footnotes of the foolish plan for a Great Society. Trust fund reform and tax reform are solutions that go hand-in-hand. Neither will succeed without the other.

The Social Security Ponzi scheme must stop now.

Our politicians are still dancing to LBJ's tune. Few have the guts to risk their career today for the future of our children. All trust funds must be taken off budget and the funds invested for real growth and savings as they are in other nations. As long as everything remains in one pot, payroll taxes will continue to rise to reduce the appearance of the deficit. We have laws against Ponzi schemes in the private sector. Maybe it's time the same laws are applied to our politicians.

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the weekly Standard

On Partial-Birth Abortion

In a 1993 interview in *Cincinnati Medicine*, Dr. Martin Haskell described how he had developed a partial-birth abortion procedure—and used it more than 700 times. Because of the "toughness and development of the fetal tissues," he explained, late-pregnancy abortions were difficult to complete using the standard dismemberment and extraction technique. They sometimes took 45 minutes. But when the baby was in a breech position, feet first, Haskell discovered he could make things "very, very easy." It was "serendipity."

Brenda Pratt Shafer is a registered nurse who assisted Dr. Haskell at his Dayton, Ohio, clinic in September 1993. During her third day at work, Nurse Shafer watched him perform three abortions. The first patient, according to her congressional testimony, was a mother 26-and-a-half weeks pregnant with a Down syndrome child.

"Dr. Haskell went in with forceps and grabbed the baby's legs and pulled them down into the birth canal," she said. "Then he delivered the baby's body and arms—everything but the head. . . . The baby's little fingers were clasping and unclasping, and his feet were kicking. Then the doctor stuck the scissors through the back of his head, and the baby's arms jerked out in a flinch, a startle reaction, like a baby does when you throw him up in the air and he thinks he might fall. Then the doctor opened up the scissors, stuck a high-powered suction tube through the opening, and sucked the baby's brains out. Now the baby went completely limp."

Later the same day, Brenda Shafer observed two additional, similar operations, both of which "involved healthy mothers with healthy babies." And then she quit her job.

Congress has now voted to ban the use of partial-birth abortions in the United States. President Clinton, with his April 11 veto of the ban, has acted to preserve the practice. The president's veto was wicked. It should be overridden. And failing that, it should be held against him—in the fall campaign and ever after.

THE PRESIDENT'S VETO WAS WICKED. IT SHOULD BE OVERRIDDEN—AND HELD AGAINST HIM IN THE FALL CAMPAIGN AND EVER AFTER.

For most of the past year, organized abortion proponents have contended that Brenda Shafer's tale is untrue. "There is no such thing as a 'partial birth,'" Kate Michelman of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League told a radio audience in November.

"Question: When does the fetus die?" asked a fact sheet circulated by Planned Parenthood last fall. "Answer: The fetus dies of an overdose of anesthesia given to the mother. . . . This induces brain death in a fetus in a matter of minutes. Fetal demise therefore occurs . . . while the fetus is still in the womb." A contemporaneous National Abortion Federation document reported that "the narcotic analgesia given to the pregnant woman prevents any [pain] sensation" her baby might experience.

But these claims were contradicted by Haskell himself in July 1993. When asked by the American Medical Association's newsletter "whether or not the fetus is dead" before it enters his patient's birth canal, the doctor responded without hesitation. "No, it's not. No, it's really not," he said. "A percentage are . . . probably about a third of those are definitely dead before I actually start to remove the fetus. And probably the other two-thirds are not." A clinical paper Haskell submitted to a 1992 National Abortion Federation seminar exactly tracks Nurse Shafer's account of his methods. And it clearly identifies his relevant instruments: "a pair of blunt curved Metzenbaum scissors" that "the surgeon then forces . . . into the base of the skull," and a "suction catheter" that "evacuates the skull contents." Haskell does not use—and does not pretend to use—anesthesia as an agent of fetal demise, as his political defenders have claimed.

The late Dr. James McMahon of Los Angeles, the only other American physician prominently associated with partial-birth abortion, *did* imply before his

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death in October that anesthesia was the key, humanizing element in the procedures he employed. "The fetus feels no pain," he wrote in a letter to the House Judiciary subcommittee on the Constitution last June. "This is because the mother is given narcotic analgesia" that passes "directly into the fetal bloodstream." The result: "A medical coma is induced in the fetus. There is neurological fetal demise. There is never a live birth."

Against this suggestion—and with great heat, though little press coverage—the nation's anesthesiologists have rebelled. Dr. Norig Ellison, president of the American Society of Anesthesiologists, called the McMahon letter "entirely inaccurate" in House testimony last month. "In my medical judgment, it would be necessary, in order to achieve neurologic demise of the fetus in a partial-birth abortion, to anesthetize the mother to such a degree as to place her own health in serious jeapardy." Dr. David Birnbach, president-elect of the Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology, concurred. If Dr. McMahon *was* using massive, lethal doses of anesthesia during partial-birth abortions, he was also "definitely placing the mother's life at great risk." And this is "absolutely not" an acceptable medical practice.

Dr. Ellison said it was a "gross misconception" that a human fetus feels no pain during partial-birth abortion. A Pittsburgh man had written "as a physician" to assure the subcommittee that "there is no such thing as pain to a fetus. Plain and simple, pain does not exist to a fetus." When that letter was read to him, Dr. Ellison seemed genuinely offended. "I find it inconceivable that any physician would make a—would attach his name to a letter like that." Again, Dr. Birnbach agreed. Both men, incidentally, announced themselves pro-choice during this hearing.

Partial-birth abortion, then, is what it appears to be from Brenda Pratt Shafer's testimony. As another witness at last month's hearing, the director of pediatric care at Atlanta's Emory University, put it: "This procedure, if it was done on an animal in my institution, would not make it through the institutional review process."

And yet, bowing to his most extreme abortion-rights constituents, Bill Clinton has upheld that procedure and vetoed the legislative ban sent him by Congress. Five McMahon patients stood with the president in the Roosevelt Room of the White House on April 11 as he announced his veto. Each told a harrowing and heartbreaking story of severe fetal abnormality and late-term maternal complication. Each was convinced her health had been preserved, and could *only* have been preserved, by partial-birth abortion. And so, on behalf of this "tiny minority" of American women, just "a few hundred" each year whose well-being he said *depends* on it, the president rejected the bill. Without a "health of the mother" exception, the administration asserts, a partial-birth ban is unconstitutional and unacceptable.

But the Supreme Court has defined maternal "health" as "all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age—relevant to the well-being of the patient." It is a nebulous category that essentially encompasses the entire universe of abortion rationales. And partial-birth abortion is *not*, as it happens, primarily an emergency procedure. Dr. Haskell has written that he "routinely" performs such abortions, with limited exceptions, on "all patients" between 20 and 24 weeks pregnant. "I'll be quite frank," he said in July 1993. "Most of my abortions are elective in the 20-24 week range . . . . In my particular case, probably 20 percent are for genetic reasons. And the other 80 percent are purely elective." Before he died, Dr. McMahon reported that a plurality of what he called "non-elective" partial-birth abortions for reasons of maternal health involved the mother's "depression." His most common non-elective "fetal indication" was Down syndrome. He sometimes performed the operation because the baby had a cleft palate.

Is partial-birth abortion *ever* the safest, necessary procedure in a late-term pregnancy? Dr. Warren Hern, author of *Abortion Practice*, the standard American abortion textbook and a specialist in late-term abortions, says no. "I have very serious reservations about this procedure," he told *American Medical News* in November. "You really can't defend it . . . . I'm not going to do it." And "I would dispute any statement that this is the safest procedure to use." Quite the contrary; Dr. Hern believes it to be "potentially dangerous."

The partial-birth ban President Clinton has vetoed would have left other safe medical procedures—and other abortions—still available to late-term pregnant women under health-threatening circumstances. The ban was, in other words, plainly constitutional. And the administration's contention that constitutional protections for abortion *do* somehow extend to so hideous a practice will, if they can be brought to understand it, almost certainly shock the sensibilities of most Americans—who still innocently tell pollsters that they believe *Roe* v. *Wade* and succeeding Supreme Court decisions legalized early-term, first-trimester abortions alone.

Pro-life advocates vow they will keep the partial-birth controversy alive as long as possible, and use it to correct popular misconceptions about abortion law and practice generally. They hope his recent veto will haunt President Clinton. It should haunt him, in every respect.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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Maximum Meltdown

by Fred Barnes

THE AFL-CIO SPENT LESS THAN $1 million on TV ads over the Easter congressional recess to attack two dozen House Republicans for opposing a hike in the minimum wage—and the labor chiefs got their money's worth. The ads were simple: Each GOP House member had "voted to block a minimum wage increase after he voted to cut Medicare, cut college loans, all to give a tax break to the rich." The member under attack, the ad said, "should start voting for America's families." This demagogic pitch produced a touch of panic among a pivotal smattering of congressmen. "A meltdown," a business lobbyist calls it, "the politics of fear." Even normally unwavering conservatives like Frank Cremeans of Ohio wavered. "I'm getting killed on this," he told an associate. Anxious conservatives and Republican moderates, combined with nearly every Democrat, tipped the balance in the House in favor of boosting the $4.25-per-hour minimum wage by as much as a dollar an hour. Meanwhile, a majority supporting a hike emerged in the Senate, too.

This was a disaster for Republicans in more ways than one. As recently as March, they controlled the agenda in the House, passing modest health-insurance reform and a line-item veto and reaching agreement on product-liability changes. But their collapse on the minimum wage means Democrats, with liberals and labor in the lead, are now on offense. Neither House Speaker Newt Gingrich nor Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole could control his troops. Last year, Gingrich held Republicans together on tough conservative votes to slow the growth of Medicare and Medicaid, slash social spending, and curb environmental regulation. This spring, he doesn't have the clout—or the energy—to enforce party unity in opposition to the minimum wage. And this is happening despite the absence of a public clamor on the issue. On the contrary, a Republican pollster conducted focus groups of swing voters and found they laughed at the notion an increase in the minimum wage would ease the middle-class squeeze. Democrats thought so little of the issue as a crowd-pleaser they never brought it up in 1993 and 1994 when they controlled both the White House and Congress.

There's worse. Republicans have lost their ideological self-confidence. In 1995, they believed fervently in their conservative agenda. Even if some of their stands were unpopular—Medicare, college loans, school lunches—most Republicans were convinced they were right. They dismissed Democratic criticism as feckless. But losing the budget showdown with President Clinton shook their resolve. Now, facing reelection in November and with no agenda of their own to promote, several dozen of them have grown fearful that tired, old Democratic issues will hurt them. Thus, as many as one-third of the 74 House GOP freshmen may vote to raise the minimum wage.

Dole tried to sidetrack Senate Democrats who are pushing for a raise. But a procedural error left him in the vulnerable position of having to fight off minimum-wage amendments on every bill. With roughly eight Republicans in favor of increasing the minimum wage, Dole lacks a majority. All he can do now is attach amendments to a minimum-wage bill he says "the Democrats might not be so crazy about" and organized labor would abhor. Thus, they'd have to oppose it. In any event, Dole's strategy of using his Senate post to carry out his presidential campaign has once again proved to be a loser.

Gingrich would like to shield Dole from political trouble, but he hasn't figured out how. He has, however, created a split with other House Republican leaders, especially Majority Leader Dick Armey. To Armey's surprise, Gingrich said on April 18 that a minimum-wage bill, with amendments, might be voted on in the House. "Since we know that a minimum-wage increase kills jobs, there ought to be a package that includes other things that create more jobs to make up," he told reporters. Later, at a meeting of Gingrich's "union project," he and others discussed ways to thwart labor's anti-GOP efforts and publicize labor-union corruption. But when Bill Thomas of California, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, said he didn't have the jurisdiction to hold hearings, Gingrich was silent. And when the meeting reconvened after a floor vote, Gingrich didn't show up. Nothing was decided.

What's amazing about House and Senate Republicans is how few are willing, in a conservative era, to make the economic and social case against a minimum-wage hike. Armey is. On April 17, he sent Republicans a letter that argues, correctly, that a minimum-wage increase "will only increase the number of non-working Americans by destroying crucial, entry-level jobs." So is John Boehner, head of the House Republican Conference. He sent a memo reminding House members that both President Clinton and Joseph Stiglitz, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, opposed a hike as recently as 1993. But after Armey and Boehner, the ranks thin.

At best, Republicans will be able to delay a vote on

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the matter, then add conservative amendments. "I'll commit suicide before I vote on a clean minimum-wage bill," says Boehner. But labor-fomented trouble for the GOP may continue. The money the AFL-CIO spent on TV ads "is only the tip of the iceberg of the $35 million" that's been targeted on House Republicans, lobbyist Mark Isakowitz of the National Federation of Independent Business reminded Gingrich on April 18. Gingrich responded that boosting the minimum wage is labor's most popular issue. It's an anomaly, Gingrich suggested. But GOP wavering doesn't seem anomalous at all these days. ♦

A Republican MSA-Bomb

by Matthew Rees

House Speaker Newt Gingrich is a major advocate of medical savings accounts (MSAs), because, he says, they will inject market-based cost controls into the health-care system. In *To Renew America*, he wrote that "every American ought to have the opportunity to belong to a [medical savings account] system." That was Gingrich on offense.

Gingrich on defense said on March 28, as the House was on the verge of passing its health-care legislation, "If the president sends up a veto signal, maybe we would have to back down." Conservatives were furious over Gingrich's hint at a preemptive MSA surrender. It took on added significance after Senate Republicans failed in their April 18 attempt to insert MSAs into their health-care bill.

Despite Gingrich's wavering, MSAs should get another chance. Immediately after the Senate defeat, Senate majority leader Bob Dole indicated continued support for MSAs, and House and Senate sources say it's likely MSAs will be included in the final legislation. That will mollify conservatives, who aren't thrilled about passing a bill sponsored by Sens. Nancy Kassebaum and Ted Kennedy and endorsed by President Clinton. Pete du Pont, former governor of Delaware and a champion of MSAs, says they are "the one free-market provision that would at least mitigate some of the damage the other provisions would do."

Why all the fuss about MSAs? Their supporters, who include figures as diverse as Ross Perot and Milton Friedman, believe the savings accounts would get at one engine of rising heath-care costs: third-party payments. Companies or individuals could make annual tax-deductible contributions of up to $2,000. Individuals would withdraw money from their accounts for out-of-pocket medical expenses, and any unused amount would roll over each year, giving the mass of health-care users an incentive to shop around for the most affordable health care and to avoid unnecessary services. Individuals would have the opportunity to withdraw their deposits for non-medical expenses, but a heavy tax penalty would follow. While MSAs are already offered at over 2,000 companies nationwide, employer deposits are currently taxed; the legislation would give MSAs the same tax treatment as other kinds of employer-provided health insurance.

MSAs were always part of the House health-care bill, but it was unclear whether they would be in the Senate bill until Dole announced on April 16 that he and William Roth, chairman of the Finance Committee, would offer an MSA amendment. The announcement came after pressure from Senate conservatives, including Trent Lott and Don Nickles.

But like so many issues before Congress, MSAs have become politicized. The Senate minority leader, Tom Daschle, supported MSAs in a September 1992 letter but has since retreated, calling them "the Dr. Kevorkians of health reform." The Clinton administration has also experienced a change of heart. In late September Clinton said "the medical savings account may be something that we ought to explore and experiment with," and during the budget debate he expressed support for them. But on April 15 Donna Shalala, Health and Human Services secretary, characterized MSAs as "an inherently bad and risky idea" that "threatens to undermine the insurance safety net." The politicization is such that in the April 18 Senate vote, every Democrat favored keeping MSAs out of the health-care bill.

Both Democrats and the press have also repeatedly stressed that the most prominent advocate of the savings accounts—J. Patrick Rooney, former chairman of the Golden Rule Insurance Co.—has contributed over $1 million to Republicans since Bill Clinton became president. (Golden Rule is an advertiser in The Weekly Standard.) Rep. Jim Moran of Virginia, a Democrat, delivered a heated denunciation of Golden Rule during floor debate on the health bill, zinging the company because more than half of its revenues went to "shareholder profits" and calling the whole effort "a sham."

Yet the campaign against MSAs does not have unanimous Democratic support. Rep. William Lipinski of Illinois says he's "disappointed" Senate Democ-

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rats fought them, while Rep. Andy Jacobs of Indiana told me he's "amazed" by the opposition: "It's unfortunate that emotions have taken precedence over reason." On April 17, Jacobs and Rep. Robert Torricelli, who is running for the Senate in New Jersey, sent a letter to Clinton touting MSAs as a "wonderfully innovative idea" that will control costs and increase access. Torricelli is making them a major plank in his health-care platform.

It's clear, then, that MSAs will remain a political issue this year. And conservatives fear that if Democrats somehow succeed in blocking MSAs this spring, the health-care legislation won't bear a sufficiently Republican imprimatur; thus credit will go not to Dole and Gingrich, but to Clinton and Kennedy. With Democrats better recognized for their health-care efforts than Republicans—President Clinton called for passage of the health-care legislation in his State of the Union speech—this is a reasonable fear.

All of this underscores the need to include MSAs in the legislation. But Dole is in a difficult position as presidential candidate and Senate majority leader. He's penalized if legislation languishes in the Senate, yet he risks Clinton's hogging the credit for whatever becomes law. The squeeze on Dole has been exacerbated by the lack of deference accorded to him (it was a Republican, Kassebaum, who led the anti-MSA effort) and by his failure to employ the same hardball tactics against Democrats they're using against him.

His approach to Kennedy demonstrates this. Even while pressing to keep his own health-care legislation free of amendments, Kennedy derailed immigration reform by offering an amendment to raise the minimum wage. He also said MSAs would be a "killer amendment" to the health bill, hardly behavior that merited reward from Dole. Senate Republican staffers were furious when Dole agreed on April 17 to bring Kennedy's health-care bill to the floor the next day.

Assuming Dole sheds this defensive posture and sticks to his pledge to fight for MSAs, the looming question will be whether Clinton will veto health reform because of an MSA provision. He could probably get away with it, as congressional Republicans concede they would send a bill back without MSAs. But Gingrich is standing firm, having sent a four-page letter to the White House on April 10 strongly plugging MSAs. We'll soon see just how much capital he and Dole are willing to expend, but at the very least some progress has been made: Preemptive surrender has been dropped as a negotiating tactic. ♦

PULITZER POLITICS

by Tucker Carlson

IN HIS RECENT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, Ben Bradlee sums up the schizophrenic feelings many journalists have about the Pulitzer prize. "First," writes the former editor of the *Washington Post*, "as a standard of excellence the Pulitzer prizes are overrated and suspect." Less than a page later, Bradlee goes on to detail his frantic attempts to wangle one of these overrated and suspect prizes for his newspaper.

Endowed more than 80 years ago by Joseph Pulitzer, a Hungarian-born newspaper publisher with a soft spot for sensational headlines and alcoholic reporters ("Find a man who gets drunk and hire him at once," Pulitzer once instructed an editor), the 14 Pulitzer prizes for journalism awarded each spring have for decades drawn a mixture of scorn and adulation from those who would win them. And it's easy to see why. The board that oversees newspapering's most prestigious award has a mixed record of picking what is best in American newspapers. This year's Pulitzer prizes will be remembered as an especially stark example of spotty judgment, and for one reason: Dorothy Rabinowitz didn't win one.

Rabinowitz, an editorial writer and columnist at the *Wall Street Journal*, has over the last several years waged a campaign on behalf of dozens of people wrongly accused of molesting children (see "America's Foremost Muckraker," THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Jan. 8). By pursuing leads other reporters ignored, Rabinowitz single-handedly exposed a number of highly visible sex-abuse cases as legal witch hunts, complete with fabricated evidence, coerced testimony, and unscrupulous prosecutors motivated by political gain. Taken together, Rabinowitz's columns constituted a classic Pulitzer prize-winning series, in which a lone reporter rises to the defense of the despised and powerless while taking aim directly at the Establishment, in this case cops, judges, prosecutors, and child-welfare workers. Over the course of 1995 alone, Rabinowitz's columns for the *Journal*—the same columns she submitted to the Pulitzer prize board this year—were responsible for freeing at least two wrongly convicted people from prison with their convictions overturned, as well as for convincing countless news outlets to change their editorial positions on the cases she covered.

Rabinowitz's work was, in other words, precisely

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the kind of journalism the Pulitzer prizes were designed to honor. But she didn't win. Instead the award for distinguished commentary went to another finalist in the category, E.R. Shipp of the *New York Daily News*. While Shipp's columns—on affirmative action, welfare, and black culture—are at times impressive, they do not begin to compare in style or effect to those Rabinowitz submitted.

What happened? The board that confers the Pulitzers won't say, officially. For a group ostensibly committed to free access to information, the 18-member board of academics and professional journalists operates surprisingly like a secret society. "The proceedings within the board meeting are privileged, and are never discussed or revealed," says Seymour Topping, the board's administrator. According to Topping, keeping the proceedings under wraps allows the judges to speak more freely, while protecting feelings. This explanation is undoubtedly well-meaning, but secrecy also has another effect: allowing the board to make ill-informed or politically motivated decisions without the cleansing benefit of public scrutiny. Indeed, had the board's proceedings been open to the outside world, it is unlikely the debate over Rabinowitz's entry would have unfolded as it did.

The great mystery of this year's Pulitzer prize decisions is how the board could fail to choose a journalist whose columns had, unlike so much that is printed in newspapers, actually changed society and freed innocent people from prison. According to Edward Seaton, editor of the *Manhattan* (Kansas) *Mercury* and a member of the Pulitzer board, it's no mystery at all. Rabinowitz's columns, says Seaton, had no such effect on society and certainly didn't get anyone out of jail. Seaton says he knows this because other members of the board explained it during the deliberations. "I don't want to get into criticizing," Seaton says, "but we did have members of the board who lived in the communities she wrote about, and they indicated that was not the case. I mean, if you just read the *Wall Street Journal*, you might have had that impression." According to board members from Boston and the Pacific Northwest, the two places where the sex-abuse cases in question took place, Rabinowitz's columns were merely rewrites of articles that had already appeared in the local press. "What she really did, as I understand it," Seaton says, "was to bring some local situations to national attention, but those local situations were not affected, to my knowledge, by what she did."

Secure in the belief that Rabinowitz's columns had achieved nothing particularly significant or unusual, some board members apparently felt free to choose the winner using less weighty criteria. "I remember one of the board members said, 'If I picked up my morning newspaper, which one of these commentary entries would I go to first?'" says Seaton. "And she said, 'E.R. Shipp, every time.'"

Mystery solved. The only problem is that the unnamed board members' assessment of Rabinowitz's columns is factually untrue—and probably deliberately so. In fact, what Rabinowitz wrote had a decisive effect at the local level, particularly in Boston. Anyone who claims otherwise is being deceitful or doesn't read the newspapers, neither of which is an encouraging quality in a member of the Pulitzer prize board.

"There isn't a day since she entered our lives that we don't reflect back and know that if it wasn't for Dorothy Rabinowitz we would still be sitting in prison," says Violet Amirault, a 72-year-old former schoolteacher from Boston who, along with her daughter, spent eight years in prison on bogus child-abuse charges until Rabinowitz's columns led to a new trial and an overturned conviction last September. Amirault says she and her family had for years begged news outlets, including Boston's dailies, the *Globe* and the *Herald*, to reexamine her conviction. But to no effect. "They considered us guilty, child molesters. They ignored us," Violet Amirault says. Finally, in the winter of 1995, the Amiraults wrote to Rabinowitz, who dug into the facts of the case and produced a moving series of columns explaining how the family had been railroaded.

Within days of Rabinowitz's first piece in the *Journal*, lawyers in Boston volunteered to take on the Amiraults' appeal pro bono. More than $70,000 poured in from *Journal* readers for the family's defense. Perhaps most remarkable, after nearly a decade of accepting the prosecutor's description of the Amiraults as child molesters, both the *Globe* and the *Herald* commissioned new investigations into the case. Both papers ultimately concluded that the Amiraults had been tragically wronged. According to Ed Siegel, an at-large critic for the *Boston Globe* who has written about the Amiraults, it was Rabinowitz, writing from another city, who spurred the local press into action. "Her stuff had enormous effect here," says Siegel. "She opened up a whole new way of looking at the case in Boston."

None of this, of course, seems to have come to the attention of the majority of the members of the Pulitzer prize board—the same body that, in previous years, has bestowed awards upon reporters like Stalin apologist Walter Duranty of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* prankster Janet Cooke, who won by making up a story about "Jimmy," an 8-year-old heroin addict. On the other hand, the Pulitzer is hardly the most important mark of a reporter's success. As people like the Amiraults understand. ♦

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AUDIT HELL

by Stephen Moore and Dan Pilla

FOR THOSE WHO—fresh from the annual purgatory of doing their taxes—already regard the Internal Revenue Service with dread, IRS commissioner Margaret Richardson has a solemn warning: Tax cheats and law-abiding citizens alike, get ready for the audit from Hell.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported on April 3 that taxpayer complaints about the IRS's new "economic reality audits" are "pouring in," as furious citizens question the IRS's need to know what schools they send their kids to and where they went on vacation last summer. Taxpayers protest that the audits more closely resemble criminal investigations than routine checks to verify the accuracy of a tax return.

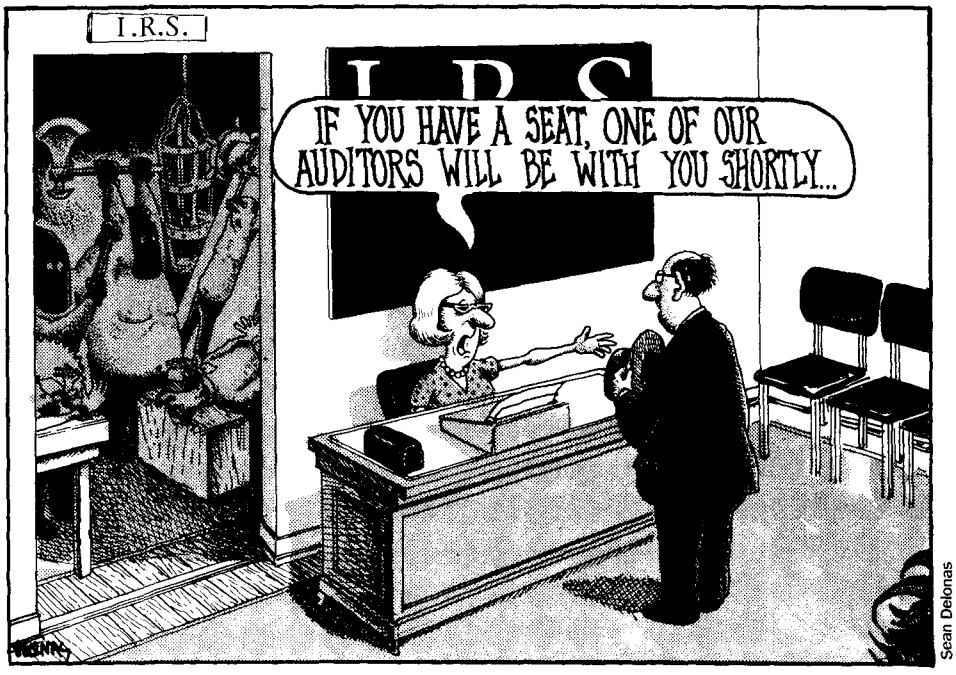
Launched early last year, the economic reality audit rests on the premise that the most effective way to monitor how much income tax you owe is to monitor how much you spent during the year. By conducting a full-scale study of the assets and lifestyle of each citizen selected for audit, the IRS intends to ferret out tax evaders. IRS manuals explain that these are "investigative" audits, not "verification" audits. The auditor is expected to "evaluate the whole taxpayer . . . from an economic reality point of view instead of only focusing the audit on some narrow aspect of tax consequence."

This, of course, is a fundamental departure from the standard audit. In the past, if you were audited, you merely had to prove that your tax returns were accurately based on valid financial records. The economic reality audit explores whether you can afford the life you lead on the income you declared. To determine this, the IRS wants to know how often you go out for dinner, where you go to eat, how you were able to pay for that custom-made Italian suit hanging in your closet, how much you shelled out for those Air Jordans, and whether you pump them up. The new audit has been disparagingly called the "underwear audit" because agents may actually ask to look through your cabinets and drawers.

It gets worse. IRS examiners now create a dossier that amounts to an economic profile of the taxpayer. IRS Training Aid 3302-102, entitled "Components of Economic Reality," identifies some 47 different aspects of a person's life as elements of the dossier. Included are: neighborhood, home, investment income, recreational vehicles, college tuition, trips, club membership, weddings of children (maybe Ross Perot wasn't so paranoid after all!), and hobbies. Also on this list are level of sophistication and cultural background. Yes, those notoriously suave and debonair IRS auditors will now be measuring your enlightenment.

In sum the new IRS wants to get to know all about you. This raises fairly obvious privacy and civil-liberties concerns. But John Monaco, former assistant commissioner for examinations at the IRS, insists that agent training for lifestyle audits emphasizes privacy, ethics, and other such niceties to "make sure that taxpayers' rights are protected." Now, that's comforting. A bit like sending Howard Stern to charm school.

This year the IRS will conduct face-to-face audits of roughly one million taxpayers, and auditors will use the economic reality approach wherever they see fit. To help citizens prepare, the IRS has developed a "Personal Living Expense (PLE) Checklist." The taxpayer is requested to list all personal living expenses paid during the years in question. These include expenditures on "food, alcohol, housing, utilities, supplies,



Sean Delonas

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equipment, apparel, entertainment, personal care, reading, education, tobacco," and so on. Why is all this information needed? The IRS manual states: "Most taxpayers will not intentionally deposit skimmed funds, but will use the cash to increase their standard of living." Hence, "The more information an examiner can develop, the larger the understatement [of tax]. The development of the personal living expense can be extremely critical in this process."

But the IRS has no intention of relying solely on the citizen's own statements in building a dossier. The agency intends to develop external sources of data not ordinarily available to the IRS. These include the U.S. Postal Service, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Department of Agriculture, social-services agencies, courts (which record marriages, divorces, liens, inheritances, property transactions, mortgages, and bankruptcies), trade associations, banks and credit unions, insurance providers, and commercial databases such as Dunn & Bradstreet, Robert Morris, and LEXIS.

But the invasiveness of the new audits doesn't stop there. The IRS intends to contact third parties—"informants," as it sometimes calls them—who may have information about the citizen under audit. These include landlords, employers, business and personal associates, ex-spouses, even your next-door neighbor. In some cases informants will be paid if information leads to higher tax collections.

Eventually, the plan is that the IRS will gain access to all public and many private computer databases in the nation. The IRS also intends to track electronically any significant financial transactions, property acquisitions, business moves, and the like. *Investor's Business Daily* reported last year that the IRS recently began an information reciprocity arrangement with San Francisco-area banks. Under the arrangement, banks transmit to the IRS all information given them by prospective borrowers. The IRS checks the disclosures made on loan applications against the information on tax returns. When discrepancies are found, the IRS asks the individual for an explanation, and an economic reality audit is set in motion.

Shortly after the computer-access proposal was published in the *Federal Register* last year, a firestorm of controversy flared. Within weeks, the IRS claimed that its system had been misunderstood and that it was withdrawing the proposal. But it never did.

So just who is watching the watchdog? The IRS launched its economic reality audits during the Republican ascendancy on Capitol Hill, but so far they have drawn only yawns from Congress. That's not too surprising. Traditionally Washington takes a bipartisan laissez-faire attitude toward IRS collection activities. The Treasury Department estimates that at least $150 billion in income tax goes uncollected each year, and Congress wants the money desperately.

Meanwhile, the IRS insists that as our economy proceeds further into the Information Age, where funds can be transferred invisibly from computer terminals, tracking income through conventional audits is increasingly futile. Phil Brand, chief compliance officer at the IRS, told the *Washington Post* that "examination activity based on verification of deductions and known income" is no longer "the best in our judgment" for hunting down underreported income.

Alas, he is probably right. As long as we preserve our modern income-tax system, these outrageously invasive and intimidating audit procedures will become routine. The government will demand ever greater access to the details of our private lives. If the survival of the tax system demands such probes of law-abiding citizens, maybe it's time to uproot the system itself.

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David Ifshin's Journey

by Morton M. Kondracke

If the Democratic party had followed the ideological path of David Ifshin—from student anti-war protester to true "New Democrat"—it might have remained the majority party. If Bill Clinton had heeded David Ifshin's advice in early 1992, he might not have the Whitewater scandal hanging over his head. If Clinton hadn't allowed left-wingers in his entourage to block Ifshin from an administration post, Clinton might not have to remake himself as a centrist to get reelected.

David Ifshin's biography, though, is far from a saga of might-have-beens. In his 47 years, he has popped up all over recent American political history—as the National Student Association president who made an infamous radio broadcast in North Vietnam, as an offi-

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cial of the National Welfare Rights Organization, then a convert to Henry Jackson's neoconservative foreign policy, staunch defender of Israel, counsel to both the Mondale and Clinton presidential campaigns, and passionate foe of leftist influence in the Democratic party. I am writing about him now because David Ifshin is wasting away with cancer that was diagnosed only five months ago, and it seems proper to recount his fascinating career while he is still with us.

Ifshin grew up middle class in the Washington suburbs, the son of a liquor-store owner, and went off to Syracuse University in 1966 as a supporter of the Vietnam war. Gradually, he got caught up in campus protest, turned against the war, and watched friends get clubbed by police—for no good reason, he says—at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago.

He went back to Syracuse, was elected student-body president, and carefully worked to keep anti-war rallies he was involved in peaceful—indeed, he organized just such a rally and was horrified 22 years later to find it portrayed as a violent uprising in Oliver Stone's movie *Born on the Fourth of July*. He was elected president of the National Student Association because he ran against demands for special budget assistance to a black student group on the basis of race.

And then he committed his appalling act in North Vietnam during a 1970 visit. He was shown bomb damage and burn victims, after which two European "peace" doctors taunted him, a Jew, for doing as little to stop the "genocide" as a German who knew the Holocaust was underway and merely muttered his dissent. Ifshin said into a tape recorder that the United States was in Vietnam "to aggressively threaten other countries" and that if the South Vietnamese could pursue their own destiny, they would "not support the investment of private capital." Those words, like Jane Fonda's, became a North Vietnamese propaganda coup. Ifshin has apologized many times for his actions, though he still believes that the war was unwinnable from the outset and a vast waste of human life.

In spite of his conduct in Hanoi, he was never pro-Communist. And shortly after his trip to Vietnam, he became a convert to anti-communism when he visited Salvador Allende's Chile and saw the Left arming its supporters to convert an electoral plurality into a permanent dictatorship.

He says he had a kindred experience in domestic policy over welfare rights. In 1972, he helped push a destructive guaranteed-income proposal at Democratic platform hearings—"$5,500 or fight"—but he bailed out of the National Welfare Rights Organization when its leader, George Wiley, insisted on staging a protest demonstration at the Democratic convention in spite of an agreement with the McGovern campaign to avoid one. Ifshin worked in that campaign as a get-out-the-vote organizer but now considers the candidate's foreign-policy and defense views "naive."

He went to Irael in 1973 and found his center of gravity working on a kibbutz. "It was as transforming an experience for me as the Chicago convention," he says. His political epiphany came during the Yom Kippur War, when he helped unload the C5As that the United States was sending, in wave after wave, to resupply Israel with military equipment at a time when no other nation would. "The desolation I felt about Vietnam, when we dropped so much ordnance in a huge mistake," he says, "was turned around for me by the demonstration of what good American power could do."

Ifshin returned home to go to law school and in early 1976 met up with Sen. Henry Jackson, who persuaded him not to abandon politics. Jackson told him, "All my good friends were Communists once. It's not unusual for people your age to be enamored of the Left. God knows how many lives have been messed up by Vietnam, but you've got a good sense now of what you believe, and don't let anyone ridicule you for where you've been. Stick with it."

Ifshin became one of the nation's foremost experts on campaign finance law. He moved to Washington and got involved in the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, the neocon rump group inspired by Scoop Jackson to toughen Democratic foreign policy. In 1984, as chief lawyer for the Mondale presidential campaign, he earned the enmity of party left-wingers by leading the resistance to demands from Jesse Jackson—who'd hugged Yasser Arafat and called New York "Hymietown"—for concessions at the Democratic convention and a prominent role in the campaign. Some enemies Ifshin made then would later clobber him in the Clinton campaign.

Ifshin first met Bill Clinton in 1970, when Ifshin was NSA president and Clinton a Yale law student. They met up again during the McGovern campaign, but got to know each other well after Clinton became Arkansas governor in 1979. They golfed and schmoozed together at Renaissance Weekends and as activists in the Democratic Leadership Council, the 1980s successor to the Coalition for a Democratic Majority. "I believed that he was one of the few Democrats who could really persuade old Democrats that the only way we could win was to make cuts in entitlements and so on," Ifshin says. "I always thought he was a mix of New Democrat and old Democrat, but I thought he was going to be a tough guy. I thought he'd do the opposite of what he did on health care, welfare, and the minumum wage. The Left has too much center of gravity in the party, though."

Before his eyes were opened about Clinton, Ifshin signed on as general counsel to Clinton's campaign for

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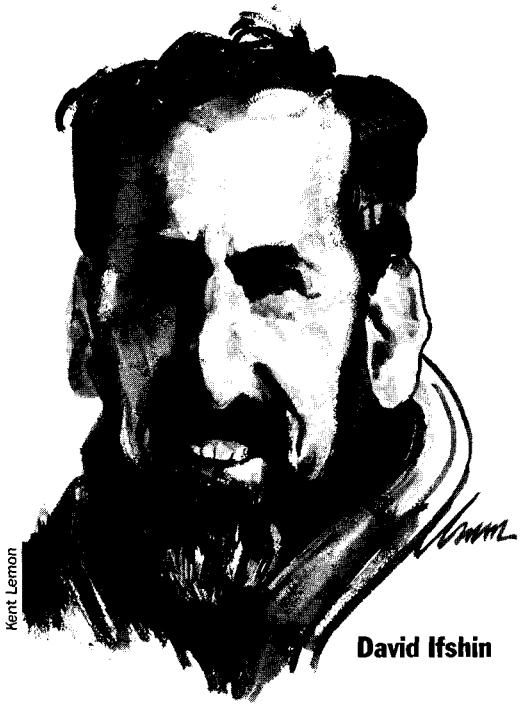
the Democratic presidential nomination. He organized a huge bank loan to keep the campaign going after the Gennifer Flowers eruption—and warned, when *New York Times* reporter Jeff Gerth started looking into Whitewater, against repeating the Mondale campaign's pattern when Geraldine Ferraro's finances got questioned: "Put it all out, and in the next news cycle."

Instead, as James Stewart recounts in *Blood Sport*, the Whitewater matter was seized by New York lawyer Susan Thomases, best buddy of Hillary Clinton and political ally of Harold Ickes, once manager of Jesse Jackson's campaign and Ifshin's longtime nemesis. Ifshin was shoved out of the way because, campaign chairman Mickey Kantor told him, "the candidates" (note the plural) didn't agree with his advice. Ifshin told Kantor, "If you don't level" and Clinton gets elected, "you'll wind up with a special prosecutor."

Ifshin remained general counsel, but on the fringe of the main campaign action—until the New York primary, where Clinton was in a must-win situation against Jerry Brown and Paul Tsongas. Ifshin says that Kantor called him in desperation because, Kantor said, New York was falling apart. Ifshin discovered that Ickes, Clinton's New York manager, had organized the campaign around the coalition of blacks, Puerto Ricans, and liberals that had elected his friend David Dinkins mayor of New York and that Dinkins was counting on to reelect him in 1993. Jews were relegated to finance positions despite the importance of the Jewish vote in New York. Polls showed that Clinton was running roughly even with Brown and Tsongas among Jews, despite the fact that Brown had promised to make Jesse Jackson his running mate.

To rescue the situation, Ifshin—with credibility based on his Mondale connection and his service as chief counsel for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Israel lobby in Washington—organized top figures in the Jewish community to listen to and vouch for Clinton. Ifshin put together one crucial event at which Clinton delivered a boffo line first suggested by Ifshin's friend Tom Tisch: "If all you knew about Israel came from what you saw on TV and the newspapers, you'd have a pretty negative impression. The same is true of me."


Kent Lemon

David Ifshin

When Ifshin told Ickes at campaign headquarters that the primary campaign was now "all worked out," Ickes became enraged and began shoving him. "You don't realize," Ifshin recalls Ickes yelling, "we're going to get rid of you right after the New York primary." When Clinton won the primary with 41 percent, to 29 percent for Paul Tsongas and 26 percent for Brown—and with Clinton carrying the Jewish vote by 55 percent to 34 percent over Tsongas—Clinton came to his hotel room to say thanks. "Standing out in the hall were Hillary and Susan Thomases," Ifshin recalls. "I've never seen such hatred in people's eyes."

Ifshin was warned again that Ickes and Thomases planned to get him fired, and when I wrote a column in *Roll Call* about the way Clinton won New York, Kantor called Ifshin in a rage and delivered the axe on grounds of disloyalty. After Clinton won the presidency, Ifshin was shut out of any policy job (few DLC types got such jobs), and when he was considered for ambassador to Indonesia, even that got torpedoed.

Ifshin still likes Clinton: "He's warm. He's gracious. He's good-hearted." Indeed, Clinton invited Ifshin, his wife, and their three kids to spend a night in the Lincoln rooms of the White House recently and bounced Ifshin's 6-year-old on his knee. But the two have never discussed 1992. "He'd just say that crazy things happen in campaigns," Ifshin says.

To go along with Clinton's positives, though, Ifshin says there is "a dark side, almost like Nixon. He has to win at all costs, and he doesn't have the confidence to do it without people like Harold. I think he could do it." (Neither Ickes nor Clinton responded to interview requests.)

Ifshin has concluded that, ideologically, Clinton is more a McGovernite than a New Democrat and thinks it's probable that in a second term, Ickes and Hillary Clinton would dominate administration policy, acing out Vice President Al Gore's staff. Even so, Ifshin says, if he's alive in November, he'll still vote for Clinton. David Ifshin is loyal to his friends, even those who disappoint him.

Morton M. Kondracke is executive editor of **Roll Call**.

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THE DEATH OF GIRLHOOD

By Wendy Shalit

It has been more than a week since the death of seven-year-old Jessica Dubroff, who was trying to become what her daddy and mommy wanted her to become: the youngest pilot ever to complete a cross-country flight. We have since learned several things about the crash itself. First, though fractures to her adult co-pilot's wrist suggest he was in command during the final plunge, the initial stalling of the aircraft was caused by its nose being lifted at too sharp an angle—a mistake some speculate was more likely to have been made by Jessica herself. And had her father not delayed the flight an hour to field all the media hoopla surrounding their takeoff, they could have avoided a driving sleet storm.

That detail, among others, has caused the press to shift the subject away from the fact that a seven year-old was trying to fly a small plane across the country and onto the conduct of the press itself. Has the age of hype gone so far now that attention-hungry parents and news-hungry media are colluding to place children in danger? As *Newsweek*'s Jonathan Alter put it, "media folks are asking some hard questions of themselves, such as why they didn't ask some hard questions before the folly began."

Conditions were harsh enough that day to challenge a veteran pilot, but camera crews were waiting at the next stop. Another video camera was on the plane. Then there was the *Today* show waiting to interview Jessica once they reached Massachusetts. CNN's Martin Savidge said it all when he told Jessica, "I can't wait to talk to you and find out how it went." Across the nation, news stories piled up. Anchormen trilled, "Never mind the fact that she can't reach some of the cockpit pedals—she's in the driver's seat anyhow!" Everyone was eager to live up to great expectations. She was very brave—wasn't she? "'Fear' is a word that's not part of Jessica Dubroff's vocabulary," reported Vick Lee, KRON-TV correspondent. Little did we know that this would prove *literally* true, that Jessica's mother Lisa Hathaway didn't teach or use "negative words."

Some of the public response to news of Jessica's death had the same eerily positive spin. Banners near her home town read: "Jessica—An inspiration to all of us. Keep soaring." Orril Fluharty, a minister attending her funeral, enjoined us to "use Jessica as an example to live our lives to the fullest." Even Governor Pete Wilson eulogized Jessica in terms uncannily similar to the ones that fueled her father's ambition in the first place; the crash, he said, had "ended the dream of a little girl who wanted to be the youngest person to fly across America. Jessica believed that if she could do this, she could do anything. She embodied the California spirit."

The only problem with these accounts, of course, is that they weren't quite true, to the extent the stunt wasn't in fact her dream, but Lloyd's and Lisa's. More significantly, these accounts reveal the hidden dream of an entranced public, still caught up in the very mentality that allowed her crash to happen—the mistaken belief that Jessica was engaged in some kind of worthy self-actualization, and we were witnessing some sort of *rite de passage*. She was a girl on the brink of becoming a truly liberated woman. "Now, the seven-year-old girl from Pescadero, Calif., is taking her independent spirit to the sky," in the pre-crash words of the *San Francisco Examiner*'s Eve Mitchell.

The answer to this kid-glove treatment of a patently insane act that came to a predictably tragic end may lie along the front of Jessica Dubroff's baseball cap, where the triumphant words "Women Fly" were emblazoned in black lettering. Why was Jessica wearing a cap that said "Women Fly," when no woman, only a little seven-year-old girl, was flying that day? There is no way of understanding the media's reluctance to question this daredevil flight without attending to the social significance of Jessica's cap. Pushy parents have existed from time immemorial, but social pressure to protect children—particularly young girls—also existed to check the egos of parents. Pushy parents do not operate in a vacuum. And neither do

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the media. Both act in response to ideas in common currency, even if they do not know they are doing so. The death of Jessica Dubroff, a seven-year old girl, throws light on another, little-remarked death: The death of girlhood itself.

Women pilots have long occupied a special, almost sacred, place in the imagination of modern feminism. As Louise Thaden put it in 1938: "Flying is the only real freedom we are privileged to possess." Eleanor Roosevelt, who was friends with Amelia Earhart and wanted to take flying lessons, was prohibited by FDR from doing so. That may be what an exhilarated Margery Brown had in mind when she exclaimed in 1930, "Women are seeking freedom. Freedom in the skies! . . . The woman at the wash-tub, the sewing machine, the office-desk, and the typewriter can glance up from the window when she hears the rhythmic hum of a motor overhead, and say, 'If it's a woman she is helping free me, too!' A woman who can find fulfillment in the skies will never again need to live her life in some man's spare moments."

MANY HAVE DUBBED JESSICA DUBROFF "ANOTHER AMELIA EARHART," BUT THERE IS ONE DIFFERENCE: A DIFFERENCE IN AGE.

And indeed, one of the reasons Amelia Earhart was admired by some was her insistence that George Putnam agree to an open marriage. But it wasn't only feminists of the 30s who pinned their hopes on women aviators: Many books on the market today still celebrate the old sanctified link, still hope for that vicarious freedom. For example, if only the "real story" about Amelia Earhart were known, as Susan Ware hopes in her 1993 book *Still Missing: Amelia Earhart and the Search for Modern Feminism*, then maybe feminism would experience its great rebirth. Francetta Cole, whom the author cites, offers a nice encapsulation of this dream: "Miss Earhart . . . is an inspiration to young women who, rather than stay at home in the kitchen, would fly the air as birds. One hundred years ago our great grandmothers had to keep their wings clipped like discontented little birds. A few ugly ducklings flew from the barnyard to become beautiful white swans. Amelia Earhart, as one of these, led the way so that others might follow. We, the women of America, feel grateful . . . "

Many have dubbed Jessica "another Amelia," but there is one difference: a difference in age. When the 1932 press took a beating for its coverage of Amelia's triumphant Atlantic crossing, it was for referring to this 35-year-old woman as a "girl" (Boston girl, girl flyer, girl thrilled by adventure, and so forth). Today, after years and years of chastisement, we seem to err too far in the opposite direction—so terrified are we of being accused of "not taking women seriously" that we let an adorable seven-year-old girl who needed booster seats and extensions to reach the pedals fly a plane in a driving storm. On the *Today* show, Lisa Hathaway said her daughter "had a freedom which you can't get by holding her back." Mom wasn't in favor of age restrictions because "to hold anyone back is to miss the message."

But what is the nature of this kind of message? To Jane Pauley of *Dateline* Hathaway said of her children, "They didn't have children's books. They didn't have toys. I wanted them to have something more powerful. I wanted them to have freedom." As Jane Pauley would later sum up: "Yesterday, in an anguished homecoming, Lisa and her children returned to Pescadero, California. Jessica's journey had come full circle. It was a hard bargain. She'd lost her life, but she'd had her freedom. "

She'd had the freedom to . . . what? To lose her life? What sort of freedom is that? A seven-year-old cannot understand the significance of this tradeoff, even if on the surface she appears bravely prepared for it (and of course, since we know the trip was her father's idea, and the decision never to teach "negative words" such as "risk" or "danger" her mother's, it wasn't exactly Jessica's decision to make). But even if it had been her decision, where in the world has this language of self- determination and autonomy for a seven-year-old girl come from?

Like Lisa Hathaway, who says she gave Jessica "the freedom to be," the controversial artist Sally Mann also speaks the language of liberation when it comes to her daughter, whom she has photographed nude and in clearly erotic poses since her infancy. Mann assures us she takes her photographs with the girl's consent, but it is rather hard to discern what constitutes meaningful consent when one's own mother is doing the asking. We do know that the daughter, upon seeing one of her mother's photographs published in the *New York Times Magazine*—with black bars over her eyes, nipples, and genitals—was ashamed, began covering herself up, and refused to let her mother photograph her nude. The critic Wendy Steiner gives us some clue where these ideas come from when she actually criticizes Mann's daughter in her recent book, *The Scandal of Pleasure: Art in the Age of Fundamentalism*: "This is

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both [the girl's] loss and ours; puritanical censorship led to this child's shame at her own body and deprived the world of works that provoke thoughts we may need to think."

Or perhaps not. Perhaps it is no loss to let a girl enjoy the genuine freedom to be found in childhood's innocence—Mann's daughter has enough time to decide for herself whether she wants to be naked in front of the whole world when she grows up. What right do adults have to take away these girlhoods under the guise of "liberating" them? Maybe these girls should stop posing naked and flying in sleet storms to please their mothers and just be allowed to play with Barbie once in a while.

But they are not girls. They are "women." And women have more important work to do.

Since I was born when feminism was already in full bloom, I am all too familiar with this strange practice of referring to girls as "women." Essentially it's to save them from being "demeaned," from suffering low self-esteem. When a bunch of girls in my school decided to found a club with the encouragement of their math teacher, it was named "The *Women*'s Science and Math Club." I only know from reading old manners books with titles like *No Nice Girl Swears* that this state of affairs wasn't always the case.

A key component, after all, of the feminist revolution involved saying "Down with Childhood," in the words of the early women's-lib theorist Shulamith Firestone. In 1970's *Dialectic of Sex*, Firestone explains why women's true freedom must eventually involve the liberation of children as well: "The special tie women have with children is recognized by everyone. I submit, however, that the nature of this bond is no more than shared oppression. . . . we will be unable to speak of the liberation of women without also discussing the liberation of children, and vice versa." We do seem to be rapidly approaching this final phase, of excising what Firestone calls "the cult of childhood." Mere casualties like Jessica Dubroff won't stop the momentum, either, for if you try to prohibit your children from doing something they want to do—whether it be eating candy or running in the middle of the street—remember that now they can always try to divorce you and get a respectful hearing on the matter.

If Jessica's cap had read "Little Girls Fly" instead of "Women Fly," I wonder whether it would have been so easy for the media to rubber-stamp her dangerous mission. Would it have seemed such a worthy undertaking? Death, too, has a way of dampening self-esteem (to the extent there is no longer a self left to esteem), and if our enlightened vocabulary is putting little girls in danger by seducing us into thinking they are capable of adult feats, then perhaps now would be a good time to reevaluate.

Though the bestseller list tells us that America has now learned, yet again, that males are from Mars and females from Venus—that the sexes are different and thus cannot be treated in completely parallel, egalitarian fashion—the culture at large is increasingly dominated by another idea lifted straight from feminist dogma. That idea is what feminists call the "pedestal-turned-into-cage" problem, and it holds that when males treat females too well or are too protective of them, they must necessarily be "subordinating" them. A few years ago, Wisconsin judge Daniel R. Moeser wrote an opinion explaining why he would outlaw free drinks for women. "The Court finds harm in the practice of ladies' night discounts," he wrote in *Novak and Luscher v. Madison Motel Associates*, "in that it promotes the stereotypes that (1) men are the financial providers and that women, because of their inferior economic status, need special discounts, and (2) that women are sex objects." Four days before Jessica's death, the TV talking-head Bonnie Erbe used it to defend the equal-opportunity beating of a female illegal alien in Riverside, Calif., by a police officer. "But if women want equality in society," she reminded us on her PBS all-female public-affairs show, *To the Contrary*, "can you then say, well, beating a man is terrible, but beating a woman is horrendous?"

Amelia Earhart struck a similar note in 1929 when Marvel Crosson, one of the contestants in the Women's Air Derby, was killed. "A fatal accident to a woman pilot is not a greater disaster than one to a man of equal worth," she pronounced. "Feminine flyers have never subscribed to the super-sentimental valuation placed upon their needs." The legendary fascination of her own death eight years later—a death still the subject of books and movies six decades later—gives the lie to that idea. But even so, Earhart was certainly entitled to her opinion of the value of her life after living 32 years on this earth. But when the "feminine flyer" in question is a seven-year-old girl, she is in no position to choose to exchange this "super-sentimental valuation" on her life in favor of equal-opportunity death.

A KEY COMPONENT OF THE FEMINIST REVOLUTION INVOLVED SAYING "DOWN WITH CHILDHOOD," IN THE WORDS OF ONE WOMEN'S-LIB THEORIST.

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It is up to her parents, and all of society, in fact, to protect her from making just such a choice. But someone slapped a "Women Fly" cap on little Jessica Dubroff, she innocently waved at the camera, and like a lamb to the slaughter clambered into the plane. And no one stopped her. Not her parents, not the Federal Aviation Administration, not the media, and certainly no one in the gaping crowd. For we had given up long ago on the notion that we have a special duty to protect young girls from harm.

It is perhaps the height of impropriety to contradict Lisa Hathaway's account of her daughter's life, but I simply cannot believe that Jessica had a "full, wonderful, wonderful, exquisite life," nor that she was in a "deep state of joy about her life" when her plane took its final, sickening dive. Hathaway notes that "regrets don't have any value" for her, since they "would bring [her] out of a state of peace and being," so maybe we should have regrets in her stead. Jessica should be horseback riding now, or playing the piano, or doing one of the many other things this precocious girl loved to do. One can only hope the angels will be more protective of her, and that now Jessica will get the girlhood she never had. ♦

A Dole Defeat and the Conservative Future

By William Kristol

Bob Dole is likely to lose the presidential race to Bill Clinton. He may lose badly. The challenge for Republicans and conservatives is to prevent a Dole defeat from derailing the ongoing Republican realignment and from blocking the emergence of a new era of conservative governance.

How can this be done? Above all, avoid wishful thinking. Dole is not suddenly going to improve as a candidate and his campaign isn't miraculously going to become an inspired one. Worse still, the current conventional wisdom in Washington notwithstanding, it is not inevitable that the race between Dole and Clinton will tighten up. While some contests do tighten, others don't. Some races simply settle in.

Take the 1994 California gubernatorial race. Like Bill Clinton, Pete Wilson was considered a bad bet for reelection 18 months out. But he rallied, and though never wildly popular with the state's voters or fully trusted by them, he built up an acceptable approval rating and a healthy lead by early summer. His opponent, Kathleen Brown, was never able to get any traction against Wilson, who stayed on the offensive throughout. And despite all the underlying reasons why a statewide race in California should have been closer, and why a Democrat should have had a good chance to win, Brown never really had a shot.

This year's presidential race may follow a similar course. After all, Dole now trails by double digits, and it is not easy to see how the Dole campaign is going to change the minds of many Americans who now are inclined to vote for the president.

Dole seems to think the "character" issue may do it for him. Last week, he put that idea into play in a bizarre way when he said that "if something happened along the route, and you had to leave your children with Bob Dole or Bill Clinton, I think you would probably leave your children with Bob Dole." He may think so, though the thought is an odd one, but polls suggest Dole does *not* have much of an advantage over Clinton on the issue of character—despite all the damage Clinton has suffered on that score. In one recent poll, Clinton led Dole in categories such as "can be trusted in a crisis" and "has the right temperament" for the presidency, and the two were virtually tied when the criterion was "strong leader." Another poll gave Clinton a substantial edge when voters were asked whether the candidates "share[d] my values," and had him trailing only narrowly on "honest and truthful" and "keeps promises." The Dole campaign believes the character issue helps elevate Dole above the rest of his party in national eyes, but if so, why does the GOP trail the Democratic party by only three points in a poll in which Dole trails Clinton by 17? In another poll that had Clinton ahead of Dole by nine points, the president maintained only a two-point edge over congressional Republicans on the question of whom voters trust to do a better job with the nation's problems over the next few years.

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If "character" is not going to close the gap between Dole and Clinton, then what? Can Dole make the election a referendum on Clinton the incumbent, and exploit public discontent with the status quo? It is true that most Americans think the country is on the wrong track, and that a high "wrong track" number is always a problem for incumbents. But it may not signify as much trouble for Clinton as many Republicans hope. Clinton's job approval ratings are now over 50 percent, as is his so-called "re-elect" number (the percentage of voters who say he deserves to be reelected). Furthermore, Americans are surprisingly optimistic about their own economic situation. Fully half think they are better off today than they were a year ago; two-thirds expect to be better off a year from now. Those numbers are at historical highs, and just as they are good news for the country's spirits, they are good news for Clinton's prospects.

Sean Delonas

What's more, the tax issue seems to have disappeared this year—and it has been key to every Republican presidential victory since 1980 (and to George Bush's defeat in 1992). Voters actually prefer Clinton to Dole on taxes by a slight margin, even though Clinton raised taxes in 1993 and vetoed a Republican tax cut in 1995. If Dole remains unable to take advantage of this central GOP issue, the energy behind an assault on Clinton will be lacking—to say nothing of the fact that Ross Perot, if he runs, will surely draw away some of the anti-incumbency vote.

What other options does the Dole campaign have? Dole could run to the center, with Colin Powell as the vice presidential nominee. He could engineer a significant "moderation" of the party platform's pro-life language, and could lead a major effort to pass bipartisan legislation in the Senate in the next few months. This strategy would, its supporters argue, win over moderate swing voters. But conservatives would rebel, the Republican convention would be hurled into chaos, Powell probably won't accept the vice-presidential nod in any case, and Democrats in the Senate appear able and willing to frustrate most of Dole's attempts to play legislative leader.

Or Dole could go ideological. The campaign could try to recreate the environment of 1994, by picking clear fights with the Left—on taxes, judges, affirmative action, gay marriage, and the like. But Dole seems more inclined to distance himself from Newt Gingrich than to learn from him. What is most likely is that Dole will sound moderate some of the time and ideological some of the time, and end up satisfying no one. In this respect, as in others, the Dole campaign of 1996 bears eerie similarities to the Bush campaign of 1992.

Of course, the loss in 1992 was followed by the conservative triumph in 1994, a victory made possible by the fact that conservatives did not regard Bush's defeat as a referendum on conservatism and didn't allow others to characterize it as such. The fires of Reagan Republicanism remained burning in the embers of the 1992 defeat. The challenge to conservatives today is to keep both the agenda and the spirit of 1994 alive during 1996.

There is no simple formula for doing this. But there is one temptation that must be avoided: conservatives must not subordinate all their efforts to the Dole campaign, must not succumb to the siren song of "teamwork," and must not defer to Dole. They will need to resist the notion, in the words of Newt Gingrich, that "you only have one quarterback at a time. Our quarterback's name is Dole." But politics is not football. If anything, it's more like baseball, and if you have a weak pitcher, you need to redouble your efforts at hitting, fielding, and baserunning. The cause of conservative realignment is, in any case, too important to be entrusted to one man, whatever the sports metaphor.

The best thing all elements of the conservative coalition can do is aggressively prosecute their case

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and advance their cause with little regard to Dole. House members and senators should run their own races. Activists should press ahead on their issues—making their cases and fighting their fights, through initiatives and referenda and legislative efforts at all levels of government, even through independent expenditures on behalf of candidates (including, perhaps, Dole). Anti-tax groups should push tax cuts; pro-life groups should move ahead on issues like partial-birth abortion at the state as well as the federal levels; racial preferences should be exposed and challenged. And conservatives need to move aggressively on all fronts: electoral, intellectual, ideological, and organizational. Where the Dole campaign wants to piggyback on or coordinate with such efforts, fine. But the efforts should go ahead regardless of the particular tactical judgments of the Dole campaign.

For the fact remains that whatever the weakness of that campaign, and despite the errors of the Republican Congress, conservatism remains strong and liberalism exhausted. The same poll that puts Clinton up by 11 points over Dole shows more Americans than not believing "the changes the Republicans in Congress are trying to bring about will be good for most people." Only 17 percent of Americans identify themselves as liberals today—a historic low. Sixty percent or more consistently say that government is too big and trying to do too much; only about a third of Americans say government should do more to solve national problems. Liberalism in disguise may win in November, but liberalism can't really govern America, as Bill Clinton learned to his grief in his first two years in office.

If conservatives want to look back to a somewhat comparable situation, they might consider 1956. Like Bill Clinton, Dwight D. Eisenhower came into office with his party in control of Congress, then saw his party lose control in his first off-year election. Eisenhower, nonetheless, won a big reelection victory in 1956—but the Democrats held Congress. And Eisenhower's reelection did nothing to energize the forces of conservatism. In fact, Ike's acceptance of the New Deal did much to legitimize liberalism. The analogy with Clinton and the GOP today is obvious—and after Eisenhower's reelection in 1956, the Democrats won a big off-year victory in 1958, laying the groundwork for a resurgent liberalism under Kennedy and Johnson. It is, admittedly, an appalling prospect that Bill Clinton may well join Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and Ronald Reagan as the only presidents of this century to serve two full terms. But his second term need not be the end of the conservative realignment; indeed, an Eisenhower-like Clinton (with apologies to Eisenhower for this comparison) could help hasten and deepen it.

Can conservatives succeed in shaping the national debate without much help from the Republican presidential candidate in a presidential election year? The next few months will tell the story. The presidential race will be less dominant in the period before the party conventions, and there will be a chance to get national attention for certain issues and battles. Newt Gingrich and Bill Bennett, Republican governors and Catholic bishops, anti-tax activists and judicial critics—all will have an opportunity to advance their agendas and shape the national conversation. But only if they do not wait for approval from Dole or the Dole campaign.

And if that happens, it could actually help elect Bob Dole in November. Dole became majority leader in 1994, after all, thanks to an ideological surge and a campaign strategy not of his own making. His best chance to win the presidency is if others create a political environment that sweeps him in. But whether or not Dole wins, the honor and vigor of conservatism will be intact, and it will be alive to fight another day.♦

SCAREMONGER

By Matt Labash

He's the "Robin Hood of p.r.," in the words of *National Journal*. And if your definition of an eminent public-relations man is one who can garner high-profile media coverage—the truth be damned—then David Fenton is indeed very good at his work. As boss of the New York- and Washington-headquartered Fenton Communications since 1982, Fenton has placed himself in the service of a host of "progressive" causes. In the early days, he specialized in no-nukes issues and Marxist regimes. With the end

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of the Cold War, he has largely moved on to environmental scares, most famously the anti-Alar campaign that nearly wrecked the apple industry. Now his people have turned their attention to *Our Stolen Future*, a new book whose subtitle tells the story: "Are we threatening our fertility, intelligence, and survival?"

Our Stolen Future has won the seal of approval from renowned scientists Robert Redford ("All who are concerned with preserving the Earth and the health of its children and grandchildren will find this book both important and rewarding") and Al Gore (whose foreword calls it a sequel to Rachel Carson's now-canonized *Silent Spring*). Fenton's flackmastery—along with the publisher's six-figure publicity effort—led to breathless coverage by all three major newsweeklies, the *New Yorker*, and *Esquire*, whose reporter even ran out to get his sperm count checked.

Already in its fifth printing, the book contains speculative charges about the effects of synthetic chemicals on the environment. These chemicals, called "endocrine disruptors," are said to mimic estrogen and to disrupt hormonal development. They are potentially so heinous that, according to the authors, they *might* be reducing sperm count. They *might* be causing undescended testicles and shorter penises. They *might* be increasing reproductive dysfunction, and *may* even be responsible for a host of "social problems" like child abuse, lower IQ and SAT scores, crime, impairment of motor abilities, mental retardation, and "the loss of human potential."

The book is essentially smorgasbord science—it picks only the results that support its thesis and ignores other studies directly contradicting it. This method is actually anti-scientific, because the authors start with a culprit (synthetic chemicals) and then hunt for a disease (resulting in the conjectural laundry list). Instead of positing hypotheses and then trying to prove or disprove them, *Our Stolen Future* advocates its position by seeking out selective evidence, then drawing general (albeit equivocal) conclusions.

The book's publication, like other Fenton-assisted outbreaks, is beginning to devolve into what can basely be called a scientific pissing contest. The environmentalists selectively release alarming charges with sympathetic endorsements and credulous media attention, which leaves those business interests directly harmed by the charges to play catch-up. In this case, both the Chemical Manufacturers Association and the American Council on Science and Health have released small volumes refuting *Our Stolen Future* charge by charge.

And there is much to refute. Evidence of the alleged symptoms persists in wildlife, especially in heavily polluted regions: gulls in the Great Lakes that have gone lesbian, for example, and short-penised alligators in a lake where there was once a pesticide spill. But there is no proof that the disruptors cause comparable symptoms in humans when we are exposed to synthetic chemicals in amounts regulated by federal agencies. The very idea of "endocrine disruption" sounds fairly daunting until one learns that the same compounds already exist naturally in many foods—including garlic, peanut oil, and potatoes, to name just a few. The total effect of synthetic chemicals in this regard is actually 40 million times lower than the same effect from vegetables and other foods.

Not to mention that at least one reputable study, by Columbia University's Harry Fisch, shows that sperm counts haven't fallen, period. "I was certain I'd find a decline," Fisch told the *Wall Street Journal*, "especially because we have seen a rise in fertility problems. But I was surprised. I see no decline. None at all."

Perhaps the book's conclusions aren't surprising considering that its authors are environmental activists. Theo Colborn, upon whose secondary research the book is primarily based, is a scientist with the World Wildlife Fund. John Peterson Myers is director of the W. Alton Jones Foundation, one of the deep pockets of the environmental movement. Diane Dumanoski is a *Boston Globe* environmental reporter who did most of the writing. In 1990, she told an environmental gathering, "There is no such thing as objective reporting. I've become even more crafty about finding the voices to say the things I think are true. That's my subversive mission." And in 1994, she told the *Los Angeles Times* that in order to secure a front-page spot for a story on the ozone hole, she called a source and "negotiated something that really wasn't accurate . . . something much balder than what was true."

While Fenton employees are working publicity for the book, the show is actually being run through Environmental Media Services, headed by Fenton's cohort Arlie Schardt. A former press secretary to Al Gore, Schardt now holds media breakfasts for A-list reporters to "educate" them on issues largely put forward by clients of either his firm or Fenton Communications. Some have suggested that Schardt's shop is a non-profit arm of Fenton Communications, and this charge works Fenton into a lather. "We're completely separate entities," he insists. So separate, in fact, that they share the same office space and the same receptionist. If you call an employee of one operation, they can transfer you to the other, and Schardt admits that Environmental Media Services hires Fenton Communications with tax-exempt, non-profit money

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"probably almost every week."

Schardt explains away Dumanoski's open admission of bias and advocacy: "I think those are distortions of something. . . . I don't pretend to know the whole story. It seems like an effort to detract from the contents of the book, which should be the focus of criticism." Fenton also bristles at any inference of chicanery. "We don't want to scare people out of their minds," he says. "We believe the public has the right to know about debates in the scientific community. What [the opposition] wants is for nobody to know anything except for what [its] scientists say."

That is a charge that can better be leveled at EMS and Fenton Communications, according to Joe Walker of the *Endocrine/Estrogen Newsletter* and others. Both Walker and another writer for his newsletter were thrown out of a March 14 press conference for the book by EMS/Fenton employees at the request of author Theo Colborn. Walker had been reporting both sides of the endocrine-disruptor issue for months, and would have been able to ask informed and possibly adversarial questions about *Our Stolen Future*. When I confronted Schardt with evidence that Walker had been summarily tossed, he conceded, "If he was credentialed and we asked him to leave, that was a mistake on our part."

Colborn failed to respond to a written interview request. But it's small wonder she's ducking detractors. Two of the book's primary sources on the low-sperm-count issue, Richard Sharpe of the Medical Research Council in Edinburgh and Niels Skakkebaek of the University of Copenhagen, recently chastised the enviro group Greenpeace in the *Independent* of London for similar claims that synthetics cause reproductive abnormalities—small penises especially. They told the *Independent* that such findings "misrepresent this research. . . . It is premature to call for a ban on these or any other chemicals before more research is done. . . . They are taking something that is a clearly stated hypothetical link and calling it a fact."

Both Fenton and Schardt assured me the researchers a) had been misquoted in the *Independent* and b) had no such problems with *Our Stolen Future*. "We called Skakkebaek," Schardt said, "and he said that was a distortion of something he said several years ago. As far as I know, he vetted [*Our Stolen Future*] and fully approved it." Fenton told me, "We have letters from Skakkebaek endorsing the book." When I asked to see the letters, he said, "I'm not sure yet."

Schardt later did produce two letters to author John Peterson Myers from Skakkebaek congratulating him on the book, thanking him for mentioning him (Skakkebaek), assuring him that the *Independent* quote was about Greenpeace and not *Our Stolen Future*, and admitting that he and the authors "share the same concerns." But these were hardly whole-hog endorsements, nor did Skakkebaek claim that the quote was a distortion, as Schardt had said.

When I called Sharpe in Scotland, he said the *Independent* statements came from a press release he and Skakkebaek issued last summer. Of *Our Stolen Future*, he added, "I haven't finished reading [it] yet, but we still say that the link between environmental chemicals and adverse effects on human health is still hypothetical. There's no cause and effect established—I don't think we can actually conclude one way or the other. It's not something at the moment I would say is leading to the end of the world, or infertility, or anything like that."

Skakkebaek, *Our Stolen Future*'s alleged endorser and vetter, told me, "I have not finished reading the book." And after I repeated to him what Sharpe had told me, he said, "I would completely agree with Richard."

This is hardly the first time Fenton has shaded the truth. The Alar scare, which he basically created, tells the story. In 1989, Fenton promoted a Natural Resources Defense Council report called "Intolerable Risk: Pesticides in Our Children's Food." The report contained no original lab studies, but simply embellished the claims of an EPA study that had Alar causing tumors in mice. Alar was a chemical then used by approximately 15 percent of apple growers to improve the color and shelf-life of apples and to keep them from falling prematurely before harvest.

The EPA had decided to ban Alar earlier that year because its study determined that it *might* cause cancer in as many as 50 in a million people. Unbeknownst to most people, however, was that the mice in this study developed cancer only after being fed doses 35,000 times higher than a schoolchild's estimated daily intake. In other words, the schoolchild would have had to eat 50,000 pounds of apples a day over a lifetime to contract cancer from Alar. The EPA, it need not be pointed it out, likes to play it safe—real safe. Still, even the EPA determined that Alar posed no immediate health threats and allowed growers to use it for 18 more months before the ban was imposed.

This did not deter Fenton, who parlayed "Intolerable Risk" right into a *60 Minutes* scoop with Ed Bradley in front of a skull-and-crossboned apple backdrop calling Alar "the most potent cancer-causing agent in the food supply today." Fenton deliberately designed a follow-up coalition to fan the flames called Mothers and Others Against Pesticides, headed by noted scientist Meryl Streep. "Our goal was to create

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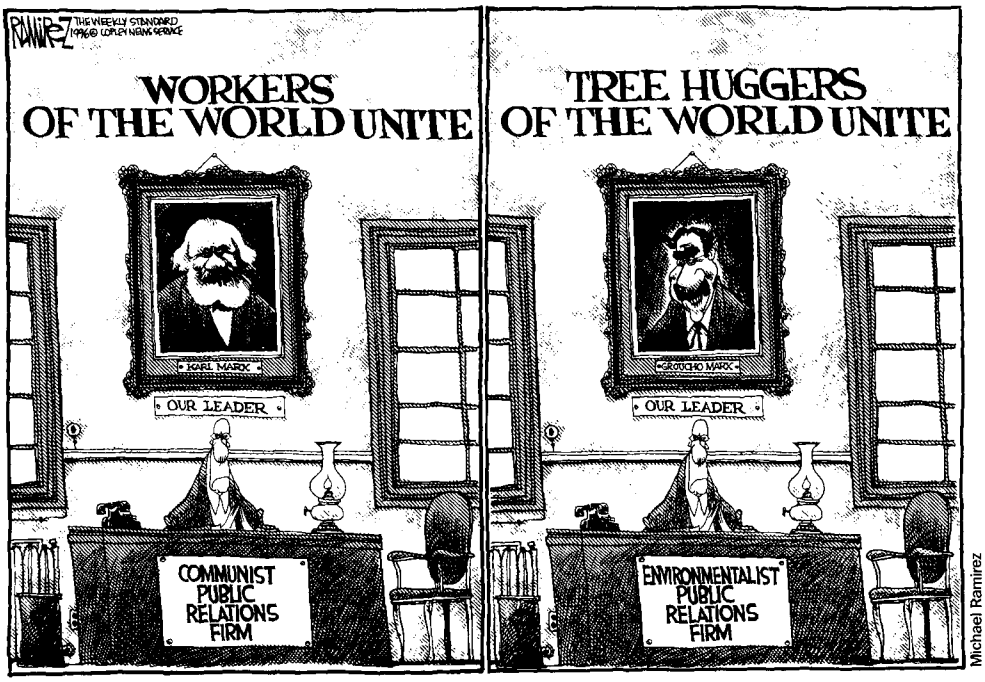
so many repetitions of NRDC's message that average American consumers . . . could not avoid hearing it," he wrote in a memo leaked to the *Wall Street Journal*. "The idea was for the 'story' to achieve a life of its own, and continue for weeks and months to affect policy and consumer habits."

It did. The Alar story caused the culinary equivalent of the *War of the Worlds* panic, with school cafeterias pulling apple juice from their shelves and mothers running after buses to retrieve apples from children's lunchboxes. The Department of Agriculture estimated that apple growers in Washington state alone lost at least $125 million in just six months. The panic led then-Food and Drug Administration director Alvin Young to call the scare "one of the worst instances of where statements were made without the benefit of scientific review." The Farm Bureau and EPA both put out statements saying that it was safe to eat apples.



Michael Ramirez

Richard Adamson, director of the National Cancer Institute division that studies cancer causation, said eating apples with trace amounts of Alar posed "certainly less than the risk of eating a well-done hamburger" and about the same as a peanut butter sandwich. And Alar was deemed safe in its regulated amounts by the American Medical Association, the National Cancer Institute, the World Health Organization, Health and Welfare of Canada, and Britain's Advisory Committee on Pesticides.

None of this mattered. Alar was such a p.r. fiasco that its manufacturer, Uniroyal, withdrew it voluntarily. Fenton was delighted: "Consumer buying habits changed overnight. Lines started forming in health-food stores. The sales of organic produce soared. All of which we were very happy about." As apple growers went broke, the Natural Resources Defense Council profited, according to an interview that Fenton gave *Propaganda Review*, a leftist San Francisco journal: "We also designed [the campaign] so that revenue would flow back to NRDC from the public and we sold this book about pesticides through a 900-number and the *Donahue* show, and to date, there has been $700,000 in net revenues from it."

A former Abbie Hoffman confidant (he brought Hoffman home from the underground for his Barbara Walters interview), Fenton was a high-school dropout who became a photographer in 1968 for the Liberation News Service, a pro-Vietcong anti-war wire service. Later, he became public-relations director at *Rolling Stone,* and his first freelance accounts included Ralph Nader, *Mother Jones,* and the Sierra Club.

Then came the Communists. Though he says "the attempt that has been made by some to characterize me as a Marxist is a joke," Fenton represented Angola's Marxist MPLA regime, Maurice Bishop's Grenada, and the Sandinistas. He seems especially to love leftist guerrillas, considering his glossy brochures for the Salvadoran FMLN and his efforts on behalf of Jennifer Harbury, the American lawyer who conducted electrolyte-and-water hunger strikes and vigils until she found out what had become of her slain Marxist Guatemalan guerrilla husband, Efrain Bamaca.

One Fenton employee opined about Harbury, "It's just a great story. There's mystery, romance. I have never in my life gotten more than a dozen calls for the film rights." While awaiting word on her husband—whose rebel group, according to the State Department, extorted money from landowners, forcibly conscripted

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children, and endangered civilian lives while assaulting army bases—Harbury credited a breakthrough on the case to, once again, *60 Minutes*. Ted Turner's Castle Rock has bought the film rights, and Schardt tells me that Ted's Turner Foundation has also kicked $30 grand into EMS's till.

Unlike most p.r. people, Fenton has said he'll represent only those he has an ideological kinship with—which doubtless yields tremendous psychic payoffs. Fortunately for Fenton, it also reaps more material benefits. His reported income from representing governments alone was $3,287,402.90 between 1982 and 1993. He told an interviewer that he made about $100,000 a year over three years from representing Sandinista interests. But monetary rewards have not co-opted him, as he insists, "I'm not a Marxist, I'm a Democrat!"

Fenton serves as an exemplar of the notion that with the failure of communism, environmental policy is now the Armageddon of the hard Left. Whether the distortions are overtly political or deal with environmental science, Fenton serves as an omnipresent Professor Moriarty figure. Even when he's not the chief architect of an embellishment, he and his clients are often in the vicinity.

In the 80s, it was Fenton who did publicity for the Christic Institute's "Secret Team" lawsuit alleging that a host of government officials was in a drug-running-assassination nexus with Contra rebels. These charges were so wild that even *Mother Jones* and the *Nation* ridiculed them. The lawsuit eventually prompted an enraged judge to order the Christics to pay back $1.2 million in defendant legal costs because of the suit's frivolity—an action that bankrupted and finally silenced the outrageous "Christies."

In 1992, Fenton was hired to help wage a $100,000 media campaign against the timber industry by Lighthawk, a non-profit outfit that took media and celebrities on aerial tours of ravaged national parks. When NBC did a piece on Clearwater National Forest in Idaho showing dead fish and aerial shots of clearcut forests, they obtained some footage from Lighthawk, part of which was taken on Fenton-run sorties. There were two minor problems with the report. Footage of dead fish supposedly killed by the toxic river in Clearwater actually came from farther south, and aerial shots of the lumberjack-ravaged forest were actually of the Olympic National Forest in Washington state—which had been cut due to fire damage. NBC president Michael Gartner, already under fire for the *Dateline* truck-bomb fiasco, resigned shortly thereafter, and Tom Brokaw read a lawyer-drafted apology. (Brokaw's wife was a member of Fenton's anti-Alar front group, Mothers and Others Against Pesticides.) Both Lighthawk and Fenton deny culpability.

But it is in scientific quarters that Fenton most effectively works his voodoo. He always operates from the same schematic: create a science scare, usually involving existing government figures that are grossly exaggerated, then push for more research and tighter regulation or outright banishment of cancer-causing chemicals. This strategy has become all the more hysterical in light of an increasingly unsympathetic 104th Congress.

Fenton helped represent a coalition of activists fighting efforts in Congress to roll back environmental-protection laws. The activists publicized outdated meat-industry data to claim the e. coli bacterium is present in 3.5 percent of ground beef. They called it "hamburger roulette." The Nationwide Microbiological Data Collection Programs examination of steer and heifer carcasses put that figure at 0.2 percent—meaning that Fenton and company overstated the risk by 17 times.

Then there's the Environmental Working Group, which Fenton has represented in efforts to cause cancer scares through its reports on pesticides in tap water and baby food. Bruce Ames of the University of California, Berkeley, called the baby-food report "an attempt to scare parents over something that is no threat to their children's health."

When I asked Fenton whether he was uncomfortable representing a group whose research is largely dependent on citizen-monitoring projects, not scientists or doctors whose work appears in peer-reviewed journals, he said, "They do have doctors and they send it to scientists." Richard Wiles, the group's vice president of research, conceded to me that the Environmental Working Group does not have a single doctor or scientist on staff, but "we do have an engineer."

Wiles does insist that "we do run our research by scientists." I called one of those scientists, Burton Kross of the University of Iowa. In an EWG report called "Pouring It On—Nitrate Contamination of Drinking Water," Kross states that nitrate poisoning via drinking-water contamination "certainly contributes to national infant death rate statistics" from the condition known as blue-baby syndrome. After checking with numerous regulatory and health agencies as well as scientists who couldn't name one single case of blue-baby syndrome contracted from a public water supply in this country, I asked Kross to do the same. "To my knowledge there are no cases in the U.S.," he said. "Several people have asked me that, and I don't dispute it." Then what proof does anybody have that federally regulated water supplies are con-

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tributing to infant mortality? Wiles of the Environmental Working Group responded by saying, "It's just obvious, you can't expose that many infants to contaminants." Pretty scientific.

Fenton's reign of error may now be in jeopardy. In 1992, he told *National Journal*: "I think we will soon have as mainstream wisdom that the major source of the great increase in cancer rates . . . is from carcinogens in the food, air and water." This idea has driven environmentalist thinking for the past 30 years. He added that he "tends to represent viewpoints that later become very mainstream. . . . Our job is to help speed that up."

The National Academy of Sciences is slowing him down. In a report released in February, the NAS—the most respected body of its kind and liberally quoted on both sides of the issue—stated flatly that the "great majority" of "chemicals in the diet appears to be present at levels . . . so low that they are unlikely to pose an appreciable cancer risk." It also said that "cancer-causing chemicals that occur naturally in foods are far more numerous in the human diet than synthetic carcinogens."

When I brought this up to Fenton, he remained unshaken. "Do you not think it is equally important to report the NAS study that just happened three years before that says that chemicals are a threat to children?" he said.

But the 1993 NAS report, "Pesticides in the Diets of Infants and Children," said no such thing. In fact, the report said more data were needed and presented no new data suggesting a health hazard from the regulated, approved use of pesticides.

That's not what the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Environmental Working Group, two Fenton clients, told the public. They jumped the publication of the 1993 report by a few days and distorted it for their own ends. The report, they said, proved children were inadequately protected from pesticide residues and that more regulation was necessary.

It is true that these claims were buttressed by Philip Landrigan of Mount Sinai Medical Center, who chaired the committee that authored the report for the National Academy of Sciences. Landrigan is also a member of Physicians for Social Responsibility, the anti-nukes activist group that was also once a Fenton client.

Fenton says, "The NAS will tell you they had two different groups and that they reached somewhat different conclusions." But the NAS's president said something quite different in an August 10, 1995, letter obtained by THE WEEKLY STANDARD. "I, too, have become concerned about recent characterizations of the report, both by Dr. Landrigan and news reporters who appear to have misstated the conclusions of the report," wrote president Bruce Alberts in response to a letter of complaint by Elizabeth Whelan of the American Council on Science and Health. "I have . . . written to Dr. Landrigan to express my concerns about the inaccuracies of his statement [on a *Today* show broadcast]. In the meantime, I have asked our Office of News and Public Information to carefully monitor any future news coverage of our Pesticides report and to take action to set the record straight if the report is further mischaracterized."

Disingenuousness of this kind is something Fenton doesn't easily own up to. In fact, quite the opposite. He is more than willing to accuse others—industry officials, lobbyists, media—of spreading propaganda. "If you report one NAS report without reporting the other," he told me, "you're picking one to further the propaganda goal. You're not doing journalism." This is breathtaking from a man who told *Propaganda Review*, "I wish there was some propagandist of the left."

LIKE A MOTHER WHO INCESSANTLY INSISTS HER OBESE DAUGHTER HAS A PRETTY FACE, FENTON REPEATEDLY SAYS HE IS A "PERSON OF INTEGRITY."

Like a mother who *incessantly* insists her obese daughter has a pretty face, Fenton repeatedly reassured me that he is "a person of integrity," "I don't lie," "I'm an open book," and that old saw, "I have nothing to hide." Since he constantly rails against those who represent industry, and told a newsletter in 1990, "Anyone involved in attempting to influence this process [determining public policy] should have to reveal for whom they are working," I asked him to give me a complete client list. He declined—just as he did when I asked about his billings on behalf of environmental interests, and even when I asked for a Fenton Communications publicity pack.

Perhaps his most candid admission came out of the "Fenton Communiqué," a newsletter he sends to clients that I had to filch from his office since the man "with nothing to hide" wouldn't give me one. I read it in his office lobby (decorated with a framed cover of Omar Cabezas's *Fire from the Mountain: The Making of a Sandinista*) after an employee told me to "just sit there and don't ask any more questions." On the very back page sat a lonely small-print epigram with "our motto" written underneath it. It read: "If you don't like the news, go out and make your own." ♦

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People: Telling Adulterers' Stories

By Jay Nordlinger

Is it worth remarking, at this late date, on the near-total acceptance of adultery in contemporary society? Or is it like noting that it is dark at night, or that the car has replaced the horse-drawn carriage? It seemed to happen so fast, really. One day, adultery was an acknowledged evil, a grave sin against God, outlawed by the Ten Commandments. Then seemingly overnight, it was as ordinary as laughter, or gardening, and anyone who raised an objection to it was a prude, a mental dinosaur, a zealot.

These thoughts are occasioned by a bible for today, *People* magazine, which devoted a special Valentine's Day issue to "The Greatest Love Stories of the Century." Predictably, it was fun to read, offering as it did short biographies of 30 dream couples, adorned with sigh-inducing photographs. There were Bogie and Bacall, Liz and Dick, Gable and Lombard—even Sid and Nancy, of punk-rock notoriety. But as the stories unfolded, an unwitting theme persisted: These unions, many of them, were founded on adultery. They were made possible by the betrayal of some husband or wife. And *People* scarcely bothered to notice, hardly pausing to acknowledge the injured ones to whom vows had been made. Yet there they were, hovering in the background like ghosts. They were the victims of these "greatest love stories," and normally it is victims who receive the lion's share of attention in *People*. But these discarded spouses were unwelcome guests at this party. They were mentioned briefly, with annoyance, if at all, then set aside, as in life, so that the action could proceed.

Of *People*'s 30 romances, 14 involved adultery (that is, began with it; for some, adultery came later). Oh, there were the token square couples among the 30, like the Rev. Billy Graham and his wife Ruth, and even a cartoon pairing (Popeye and Olive Oyl). Also, there were instances like that of Charlie Chaplin, who was an Olympic-caliber adulterer but happened to be between marriages to mid-teenagers when he met Eugene O'Neill's daughter. In three of the 14 cases, both parties were married; in 10 of them, the man alone was, and in one, only the woman was. Eight of the 14 couples never wed; five of the 30 later divorced, and others may yet.

A POP MAGAZINE'S ACCOUNT OF "GREAT LOVE STORIES" REMINDS US THAT ADULTERY IS NOW CONSIDERED AN ACCEPTABLE ROUTE TO ROMANCE.

The celebration kicks off with Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Both were married when they combusted on the set of *Cleopatra*. *People* records that, "despite numerous flings," Burton was "still joined to his first wife, Sybil, the mother of his two young daughters." Taylor was married to her fourth husband, Eddie Fisher (who had left Debbie Reynolds to marry her). Alarmed by press rumblings, Fisher flew to the set "to stand guard." But "it was too late." At some point, Burton apparently was tempted to return to his wife, but he overcame it. The Vatican, for its part, denounced Taylor with a phrase that deserves common currency: "erotic vagrancy." When Burton died, his fourth wife prevented Taylor (who had married him twice) from attending the funeral, which *People* makes out to be unsporting. And, in a way, it was, considering how casual these arrangements were.

Did you know that Mrs. Simpson had a husband when she met the prince, later King Edward VIII? That there was, in fact, a Mr. Simpson? Yes, and his name was Ernest. *People* paints him as a cooperative sort, for he "soon slipped into the background, and the Prince began squiring Wallis alone." Later, the love-respecting Windsor "orchestrated their divorce," and the rest is abdication and other history.

The account of Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner is particularly instructive. He was married, with three children, when "he and Ava started partying in 1948"—"started partying" being a new euphemism for a sin that now dares not speak its name. (The word "adultery" does not darken the pages of the special issue.) The MGM studio, which employed Sinatra and Gardner, was none too pleased with its stars. Explains *People*, "It was, after all, the age of morals clauses in con-

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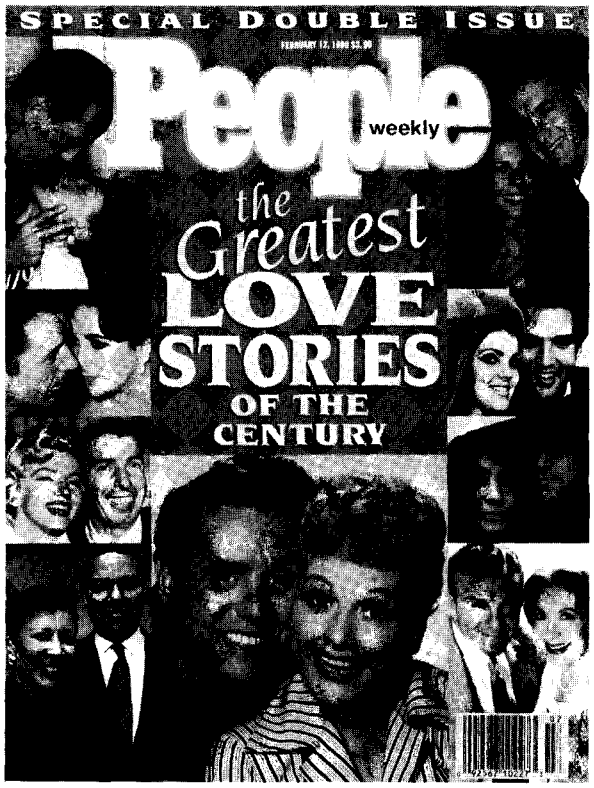
tracts and puritanical public opinion," and here we have true colors, as vivid as they can be: opposition to adultery and to the destruction of family as "puritanical."

Ably representing the Communist view are Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, who, though not among the Adulterous 14, were anything but opposed to adultery and, with raised consciousnesses, practiced it enthusiastically. Of her husband's prolific philandering, Kahlo remarked, "Diego is not anybody's husband and never will be, but he is a great comrade"—a neat summation of a point of view that used to be identified almost exclusively with the Left. Marital fidelity was a shackle of the old, oppressive order, bourgeois and religious, which the new utopia would smash.

Dashiell Hammett and Lillian Hellman, another Stalinist couple, were both married when they met, but "they eventually got rid of their respective spouses" (who go unnamed). Hammett and Hellman never wed, but "stood by each other, most courageously during the communist witch-hunts of the '50s."

"Courageously"? Let us not suppose that *People* shrinks from judgment. Its language fairly abounds in judgmentalism, steering the reader in ways both subtle and not. Clark Gable "was tiring of his second wife," who "had no interest in duck shooting or fishing, his chief passions." When his affair with Carole Lombard was reported, "the exposure hastened Gable's divorce from the reluctant [Mrs. Gable]," who, it is implied, need not be wept over, because "she walked off with a sizable settlement." (Her name was Ria.) *People*'s evident position is that the union of two such beauties as Gable and Lombard was so urgent, so desirable—practically demanded by the heavens—that only a selfish and myopic wretch could stand in the way.

So too with Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn. *People* describes Tracy as "a guilt-ridden Catholic, old-fashioned enough to be scandalized by the brusque actress in rumpled trousers"—but not so guilt-ridden and old-fashioned as to refrain from committing adultery with her for decades. After Tracy's death, Hepburn telephoned his wife, Louise, who gave her, "I thought you were a rumor." "The rebuff stung," says *People*, "but Hepburn's love had given her thick skin." The depth of Louise Tracy's skin is not considered. She is merely resented for refusing to grant her husband a divorce, thus cheating a love more glamorous.



Humphrey Bogart may have been married when he met the sizzling Lauren Bacall, but *People* hastens to assure that it was "a deteriorating marriage (his third)," and besides, the woman drank. Bogie and Bacall were thoughtful adulterers: For a full year, "the two held clandestine trysts wherever they could—always careful not to further enrage" Mayo Bogart.

Mrs. William Randolph Hearst is rapped for not releasing her husband to the showgirl Marion Davies. Hearst's sons "thought Marion an interloper" and, after the old man's death, "banished her from the empire." Boris Pasternak had his real-life Lara, a mistress, but about *Mrs.* Pasternak the magazine is silent. Not even her name is given.

Seldom is *People* shy about imposing a moral view on what it reports. Here, for example, is what it says about Chaplin's inclinations toward Stalinism: "His outspoken support for Russia's plight against the Nazis contradicted the nation's growing anti-Communist sentiment." It takes a champion manipulation of words to cast totalitarian politics in such a light.

And not to judge adultery is, in fact, to pass judgment—on its victims. The liberal, broad-minded soul who declines to judge adultery says to those betrayed, "I do not respect your suffering enough to criticize or scorn those who caused it." This same soul would not hesitate, of course, to condemn a Klansman, not merely because of the repugnance of Klan ideology but also because he would not wish to break faith with the Klan's many victims.

Historically, America has had a point of view about adultery. It has been against. And certain American elites have always considered

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this a sign of national immaturity: The Europeans are so much better, so much more *adult*, about this kind of thing, unbeholden to the Pilgrims' silly pieties and superstitions. But in recent decades, America has, sadly, grown up, and its stance against adultery and for faithfulness has significantly weakened.

After all, if you wanted to appall a right-thinking person in 1992, you might have tried saying, "I'm not sure that a blatant adulterer should be president." Public discussion of adultery in that campaign year was largely hushed. Candidate Clinton announced on *60 Minutes* that it was none of our business, and that, pretty much, was that. When he was elected with 43 percent of the vote, there was relief in some quarters that, at long last, known adultery was no longer disqualifying for higher office. Americans were starting to loosen up, starting to behave more like their European betters—were becoming less "puritanical," *People* might say.

Further proof of progress came when Henry Cisneros was installed in the Clinton cabinet. He had been forced from his job as mayor of San Antonio, but, in this new day, he would not be barred from a place of honor, no matter that he had paid off his mistress, then lied about it. What did marital fidelity have to do with running the government, anyway?

So, Hester Prynne could breathe more easily on this side of the Atlantic. Joyless Americans were measurably less apt to plaster *A*s onto the waywardly adventurous.

To find the old values—the judging of righteous judgment—even in high places, one might look to South Africa, where Nelson Mandela has distinguished himself as perhaps never before in his long career of moral example. Last month, he stood in court, erect and unflinching, and did what he had dearly wanted to avoid: ask for a divorce from Winnie Mandela. Through everything, he had stood by her—had even believed her when she claimed she was innocent of kidnaping and torture—but one thing he could not abide, and that was her "brazen infidelity." "If the entire universe tried to persuade me to reconcile with the defendant"—he would not utter her name throughout the proceeding—"I would not." He had not wanted to reveal his wife's adultery, but was moved to do so when she represented to the nation that the divorce was for other reasons. It was not. It was only for one, and when Mandela stood rock-like on principle, he, not for the first time, made the rest of the world look Lilliputian.

Many social observers in America predict another "awakening," or contend that even now one is underway. Still, it seems unlikely that adultery will regain the infamy it merits anytime soon. The few who bring it up are still regarded as freaks by respectable society. Suggest that Martin Luther King's faithlessness to his wife diminishes his heroism, despite his accomplishments in the public realm, and you will be treated, if not with indignant disbelief, with pity, as one would respond to a retarded child. The same is true of FDR, Eisenhower, JFK, LBJ—and of the exalted lovers of *People* magazine. Who, after all, has heard of Sybil Burton? Of Louise Tracy? Of the first Mrs. Sinatra? Of the "reluctant" Mrs. Gable? But there they are, or were: silent accusers, tear-stained witnesses, rebuking those who forsook them and sobering those who would pause to remember. ♦

Media

100 Years of Turpitude

By Philip Terzian

Whoever it was who said that journalism is the first rough draft of history was, presumably, a journalist. For no historian would ever suppose such a thing. And what better proof is needed than the periodic spectacle of journalists attempting to behave as historians?

Comes now the *New York Times Magazine*, which observed its centennial on April 14 by publishing a lush, slightly thicker than usual edition gleaning (in editor Jack Rosenthal's words) "bursts of passion and energy" now bequeathed to posterity. To recapture those "moments of memorable writing," Rosenthal explains, excerpts were presented in chronological order; but, he goes on, "we were struck as we kept reading to see how much powerful writing was provoked by enduring subjects like women, civil rights, Vietnam, and South Africa." Enduring? More like incessant. So here, then, we know we are in the realm of the journalist—even worse, the Baby Boom journalist. In a hundred years of history, what matters is the world since the Baby Boom began; what endures is the product of the past quarter century.

Most striking, in all its pages, is what cannot be found. The world before 1960 or so can scarcely be discerned; the world before 1940 is practically invisible.

There is one brief, quirky piece

Philip Terzian writes a column from Washington for the Providence Journal.

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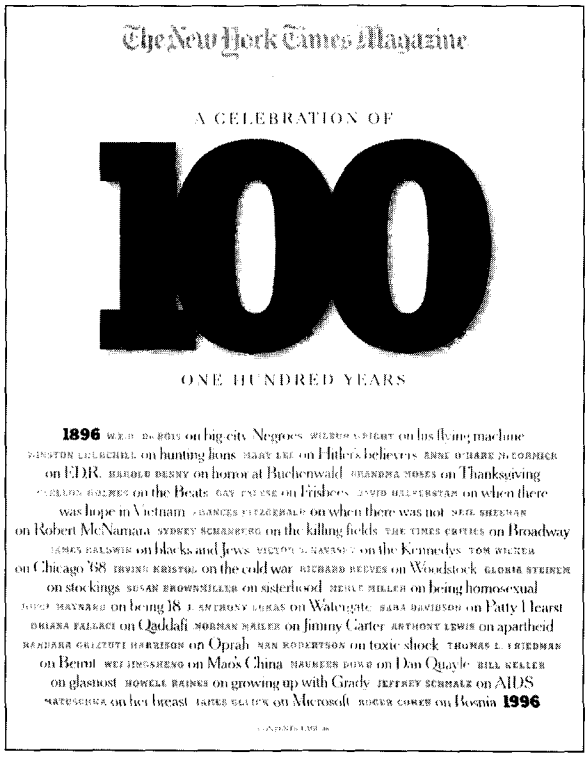
set in World War I; there are eight dispatches from Vietnam. From the founding of the magazine in 1896 until the eve of World War II—the "Early Years," as the editors call them—nearly half the 20th century is artfully dismissed with an airy visit to the Hamptons, four paragraphs about state senator Franklin Roosevelt, two bird's-eye views of Adolf Hitler, vignettes of Joe Louis and Henry Ford, and nothing whatsoever about the Bolshevik revolution, psychoanalysis, the modernist schools in any of the arts, the Progressive movement, Prohibition, the crash, the Depression, Charlie Chaplin, the talkies, the Armory show, the Armistice, or Aimee Semple McPherson.

Of war, there is nothing about Manchuria, or Korea, or the Marne, or the Somme, or the Bulge, or the Chinese or Spanish civil wars. But there are Bosnia and Beirut and Frances FitzGerald and David Halberstam and "Ho Chi Minh on the Move" against the French.

Of literature, no mention is made of F. Scott Fitzgerald, W.H. Auden, T.S. Eliot, Sherwood Anderson, Evelyn Waugh, William Faulkner, Jean Cocteau, Robert Frost, Thomas Hardy, Franz Kafka, George Orwell, Alberto Moravia, E.M. Forster, Vladimir Nabokov, H.L. Mencken, Boris Pasternak, Ezra Pound, Edith Wharton, James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, Luigi Pirandello, Wallace Stevens, Virginia Woolf, Henry James, Paul Valéry, Willa Cather, William Butler Yeats, or Rainer Maria Rilke.

Space is found, however, for Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Norman Mailer ("The emotional meat of the heart might be free of the common bile"), Joyce Carol Oates, Joyce Maynard ("My generation is special because of what we missed rather than what we got"), and Delmore Schwartz on Marilyn Monroe. Meanwhile, Leo Tolstoy, who once wrote an essay for the *New York Times Magazine*, is banished to make room for monologist Spalding Gray ("So everyone takes their clothes off and lines up like this huddling mob of naked refugees") and articles editor Gerald Marzorati, trailing Salman Rushdie around London.


The New York Times Magazine

A CELEBRATION OF

100

ONE HUNDRED YEARS

1896 on big city Negroes on his flying machine on hunting lions on Hitler's believers on EDR on horror at Buchenwald on Thanksgiving on the Beats on Frisbees on when there was hope in Vietnam on when there was not on Robert McNamara on the killing fields on Broadway on blacks and Jews on the Kennedys on Chicago '68 on the cold war on Woodstock on stockings on sisterhood on being homosexual on being 18 on Watergate on Patty Hearst on Qaddafi on Jimmy Carter on apartheid on Oprah on toxic shock on Beirut on Mao's China on Dan Quayle on glasnost on growing up with Grady on AIDS on her breast on Microsoft on Bosnia **1996**

Of science, there is nothing about the theory of relativity, DNA, antibiotics, the fight against cancer, or splitting the atom—not even about the Bomb, a startling omission that would not have occurred in the nuclear-minded 1980s. And in this century of medical science's greatest triumphs, the cynical reader may guess in advance which topics are included: toxic shock syndrome, breast cancer, and AIDS. No classical music, of course, or jazz, or opera, but a tribute to Woodstock ("It only made the world a little less uptight") and a plastered Janis Joplin ("Such a strange, unsettled mix of defiance and hesitancy, vulnerability and strengths").

Where contemporary feminism is concerned, no dissenting voices may be heard on any page: It's all Vivian Gornick, Bella Abzug, Susan Brownmiller, Kate Millett, even Susan B. Anthony II and a locker roomful of sweating high-school athletes. One woman named Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge makes the case against votes for women (1915); but otherwise, it's forever 1972 and the Equal Rights Amendment is marching toward passage. Katha Pollitt is enamored of abortion on demand; Gloria Steinem is enamored of herself.

Indeed, once the distant past is thankfully behind them, the editors descend upon familiar ground, retooling the recent past to present-day perspective. From the 1950s, we are once again acquainted with Sen. Joe McCarthy, Jack Kerouac, and John F. Kennedy; you would never have known that Dwight D. Eisenhower had lived, or Bishop Sheen, Adlai Stevenson, Helen Keller, Dean Acheson, Norman Rockwell, Charles de Gaulle, David Riesman, or Robert Taft.

You would learn, however, about the courtier spirit, which the *Times* seems to nurture. Here is Herbert L. Matthews on Fidel Castro: "Apparently it is hard for some to understand how otherwise he can work so feverishly for 20 or 21 hours a day, every day without a break. But the answer is simple; he has the build of a professional football player and the strength of a bull." This note of adoration is frequently struck: From Robert Lipsyte on Muhammad Ali ("Youth

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and light and magic, a Technicolor genie in a bottle-green world"); from Mel Gussow on Meryl Streep, and Joanne Stang on Woody Allen ("What Allen projects...is wistful futility"); from Anne Taylor Fleming on Truman Capote ("He sees everything and can make stories out of everyone"); and from William Serrin on Jesse Jackson ("How he can preach. He is perhaps the finest preacher in the country...as good as, perhaps better than, Malcolm or Martin. Oral Roberts? Billy Graham? They are run-of-the-mill honkies compared to Jesse").

For the 1970s, there is J. Anthony Lukas on the Watergate scandal to tell us all we need to know of Richard M. Nixon. There is a somber exploration of the soul of Jimmy Carter, and Merle Miller's declaration of homosexuality. The 1980s are slightly more varied, but not by much: There is greed, Donald Trump, the Gary Hart affair, a guffaw or two at Dan Quayle's expense, and poor Andy Warhol on the threshold of death. What, no essay on the homeless? No mention of Ronald Reagan? Mere oversights, no doubt.

And yet, toward the end, a pattern seems to form. By the 1980s and the first half of the 90s, as the century is waning, there's a mournful, disturbing, almost elegiac tone to the picture Jack Rosenthal is piecing together. The battles of the culture war are starting to be lost, or so James Atlas seems to think. Salman Rushdie faces death. The Communist collapse seems to agitate the world. Chinese dissidents are shot. The Argentine writer Jacobo Timerman is tortured. Nazi Klaus Barbie taunts the French. Bosnia is drenched in blood. The specter of AIDS stalks the land. Right-wing survivalists retreat into the woods, and Howell Raines stages a strategic withdrawal: fly-fishing for a while, then riding poor Grady, his family's old servant, to a Pulitzer prize, refreshing himself for the challenge of conservatism.

Maybe history, for these journalists, is coming to an end: The Baby Boom editors are starting to slow down, and the last half of the century is slipping away. For the *New York Times Magazine*, all those four-color graphics and self-congratulations cannot hide a painful truth: The Sixties are over, and it's all downhill from here. ♦

Books

Enemies of Marriage

By Claudia Winkler

Thirty years ago, in *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, Philip Rieff identified the goal of the cultural revolution of the 20th century as the "permanent disestablishment of any deeply internalized moral demands." Under the tutelage of Freud and his successors, Rieff wrote, modern man was learning a "strange new lesson": "how not to pay the high personal costs of social organization."

Now, 30 years on, comes Maggie Gallagher to describe and deplore the transformation wrought by that revolution in the primary unit of social organization. *The Abolition of Marriage: How We Destroy Lasting Love* (Regnery, 300 pages, $24.95) is her obituary for the old, deeply internalized belief in marriage as a union until death. That antique creed has been supplanted by the conception of divorce as a human right and of self-actualization as every person's central duty. Modern man has learned not only that he need not pay the high personal cost to keep a disappointing marriage intact; he actually has redefined such self-sacrifice as hypocritical, harmful to the kids ("If I'm unhappy, they'll be unhappy"), immoral.

The perfect expression of this new ethic, Gallagher says, is no-fault divorce: All it takes to end a marriage is for one partner to want out. By ceasing to require fault on the part of either spouse, the law sides with the sunderers of families. No longer a legally enforceable contract, marriage has been demoted from bedrock social institution to "lifestyle" option, which may and should last only so long as it fulfills its purpose, the emotional gratification of two adults.

Kent Lemon

Maggie Gallagher

In her indictment of the culture of unmarriage, Gallagher rehearses the familiar social and economic damage wrought by divorce and

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non-marital childbearing, but she also inventories the spiritual ravages. She laments the present state of affairs not just because it fosters downward mobility, especially for women and children, or because it has proved to be such a spawning ground for youthful addiction, depression, crime, and suicide. Her greatest contribution is her discussion of what it means for a culture to jettison the ideal of faithful love.

In our culture, something like half of all marriages fail, and most children live with a single parent before they are 18. (In 1987, the last time the Census Bureau made that calculation, it projected that 61 percent of children born that year would experience a single-parent household at some point.) Thus, our children are learning from experience that love is unreliable; that spouses are disposable. And learn this they must. In our therapeutic ideology, Gallagher notes, the self is the trump card in any moral dilemma—the self, that is, of the adult seeking personal growth, not of the vulnerable child.

Whatever we aim for, Gallagher writes, the arrow falls short. Our culture chooses to idealize not marriage, but divorce. Marriage, she says, is an arrangement that unifies the erotic, economic, and emotional interests of mother, father, and children. In divorce, those interests are cleft; adults are torn, for example, between the financial and emotional needs of the children of the first marriage and the children of the second. To comfort ourselves for the harm divorce does to children and abandoned spouses, we imagine smoothly functioning joint custody and happily-ever-after second marriages creating "blended" families. In this romanticized vision of divorce, two people unwilling to make the necessary effort as spouses become models of cooperation once they live apart.

Must it be so? Gallagher chastises politicians for refusing to address this national ill. Brave enough to exploit the fringe issue of gay marriage, most of them shrink from any discussion of stiffening divorce laws, sharply increasing tax breaks for married couples with children, or permitting discrimination in favor of married couples in housing, credit, welfare, and zoning. Even so obviously constructive a proposal as requiring sex-education or family-life curricula in public schools to level with students about the "economic, social, health, and emotional advantages of a good-enough marriage" has few takers. No wonder: Both politicians and the voters on whom they depend are as apt as everyone else to be divorced.

Moreover, even if we could bring ourselves to confront the issue through government, public policy alone could hardly turn back so powerful a tide. Nor does Gallagher call simply for locking unhappy couples in permanent misery. The essential task, she urges, is to recover the full meaning of marriage as a brave and worthwhile undertaking in itself: namely, the attempt "to come as close as human beings are capable of doing 'justice' to one human being: to know and to love him. To attempt to love just one other person the way God loves everyone. That," she says, "is the seal, the aim, the substance of the marriage contract."

This book itself is a valiant sally in a necessary campaign to restabilize the family. It is littered with brilliant formulations, both of what we have to fear from present trends and of what we stand to gain by changing course. Yet it leaves one pessimistic. Gallagher writes that no sacrifice is too great to stave off the bleakness of a world where people use one another, then discard one another, in the name of an elusive happiness. The trouble is, the sacrifice is unevenly distributed across the population. From those with the judgment or luck to choose their partner well, it amounts only to the normal forbearance demanded by the ups and downs of life. From those ill-matched, it is of another order entirely.

Who will persuade modern man to resume this burden? He has tasted the forbidden fruit. He has seen apparent good flow from particular divorces, and not only those justified by cruelty or gross dereliction. Why should he choose a self-sacrifice he has decided is perverse? It will take more than a reorientation of public policy, more than exhortation—more even than truth eloquently told—to rectify the revolution of modern times. ♦

Movies

Too-Plain Jane

By John Podhoretz

Jane Eyre is an intelligent, judicious, and sober cinematic adaptation of an overripe, overrich, hysterical masterpiece. The movie is an honorable and respectable effort undone by its good taste and emotional reticence.

Charlotte Brontë's novel is a singular literary performance, utterly believable on its own terms and utterly incredible as a portrait of real life. This is a book that begins with a tortured child left to nightmares in a blood-colored room and ends with a blinded and scarred middle-aged man living in the

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ruins of his once-great house who finds happiness and solace in a woman 25 years his junior. Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is magical and more than a little nuts, and if ever a movie version of a book could use all the bells, whistles, and gewgaws of vulgar big-budget filmmaking—swooping cameras, crashing thunderstorms, eye-popping sets, maybe a special effect here or there—*Jane Eyre* could.

Director Franco Zeffirelli's most commercially successful movie was the gooey teen romance he made out of *Romeo and Juliet* almost 30 years ago, and in recent years he has seemed to be working to undo the image that debacle earned him as a defiler of masterpieces. He succeeded beyond anyone's expectations with the remarkably effective version of *Hamlet* a few years ago starring Mel Gibson and Glenn Close. Here, he and co-screenwriter Hugh Whitemore take most of their dialogue from Brontë's novel, and have managed to compress a 500-page book into a two-hour movie rather ingeniously. (They took some guidance from the wonderful 1944 movie version with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles, written in part by Aldous Huxley.)

But at the same time, Zeffirelli and Whitemore have brought a strange, Scandinavian austerity to the proceedings, shrouding the movie and its settings in an unrelieved bleakness that extends as well to the chilly title performances of Anna Paquin (Jane as a child) and Charlotte Gainsbourg (Jane as an adult). Brontë's Jane is one of the most garrulous and expressive heroines in literature. As a child, she conducts amazingly sophisticated conversations about the devil and the afterlife with grownups and kids alike; as an adult, she captures the fancy of her sullen employer, Mr. Rochester, because of the brilliance and quick-wittedness of her conversation. By contrast, Zeffirelli's Jane is angry, defiant, and nearly as mute as the heroine of *The Piano*.

Chas Fagan

Charlotte Brontë

Consider the difference when a despairing Jane decides she is too plain and common for the likes of the wealthy Rochester (William Hurt). In the movie, Jane passes by a mirror, looks at herself, and hisses, "You fool." In the book, she gives herself a page-long lecture, a small part of which runs as follows: "Cover your face and be ashamed! He said something in praise of your eyes, did he? Blind puppy! Open their bleared lids and look on your own accursed senselessness! It does good to no woman to be flattered by her superior, who cannot possibly intend to marry her; and it is madness in all women to let a secret love kindle within them, which, if unreturned and unknown, must devour the life that feeds it; and, if discovered and responded to, must lead, *ignis fatuus*-like, into wintry wilds whence there is no extrication. . . ."

The taming of Jane Eyre makes the movie dismal enough, but there is no sight more depressing on display here than William Hurt's Rochester. Orson Welles was 28 when he committed his Rochester to film, and though he was physically all wrong for the part—too young and dashing—he rose to the occasion and gave his greatest screen performance. In his forties now and considerably less handsome than he once was, Hurt *is* physically right for the part but has utterly lost the amazing spark that once made him the most exciting American actor of his generation. He doesn't so much walk through the movie as he looks quizzically around the camera as though he has not the foggiest idea what he is supposed to be doing in front of it.

Has there ever been such an on-screen collapse? After he won an Oscar in 1986 for a self-indulgent and unconvincing performance as a gay South American in *Kiss of the Spider Woman,* something started going wrong with Hurt. Born to play Sherman McCoy in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, he watched in

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despair as Tom Hanks got the part in the disastrous movie version. He has made only one film (*The Doctor*) of any consequence since *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and is now taking weird parts in third-rate artsy fare like last year's *Second Best*, in which he essayed a shy Welsh teacher about as credibly as Hanks limned Sherman McCoy.

Hurt underplays Rochester when what the part needs is a big, colossal ham—a failure comparable to Zeffirelli's decision to tidy up Charlotte Brontë's messy, indelible vision. ♦

Sports

SECOND CHANCES

By Carl M. Cannon

The day Bill Clinton traveled to Baltimore to toss out the first ball, I was in the clubhouse as the president hobnobbed with the players. He lingered, as anybody would, in front of the locker of future Hall of Famer Cal Ripken, Jr. The shortstop and the president appeared to enjoy each other's company; they are, after all, on the same level in their respective professions. In any event, Ripken was comfortable enough in Clinton's presence to tell the leader of the free world that he wouldn't be a "real man" if he didn't throw the ceremonial first pitch from the actual pitcher's mound.

Other players in the clubhouse hovered around Clinton, seeking autographs. These men were not at the summit of the public imagination as Ripken is; they were well-paid versions of regular guys, thrilled to be in the presence of the president. This behavior was a reminder that baseball's hold on the imagination is only partly due to the feats of gods such as Ruth, DiMaggio, and Mays. A lot of it has to do with the other players, the ones who are not stars, the ones to whom we can actually compare ourselves.

Carl M. Cannon covers the White House for the Baltimore Sun.

One of the ways baseball really does imitate life (to paraphrase the sportswriter Thomas Boswell) is that it affords those regular guys second—and even third—chances and gives ordinary men an occasional chance to look and act like heroes. Some of it has to do with the nature of the game itself. As the great pitcher Bob Feller put it: "Every day is a new opportunity. You can build on yesterday's success or put its failures behind and start over again. That's the way life is, with a new game every day. And that's the way baseball is."

As a team, the Baltimore Orioles are an object lesson in second chances—for example, Cal's brother Bill Ripken. Last season, Bill was frozen out of spring training by the baseball strike. The price Bill, like other marginal players, paid for honoring those picket lines was high, and not only in lost income. In the same season his older brother broke Lou Gehrig's consecutive-game streak, the 30-year-old Bill found himself consigned to the minor leagues. "I never lost confidence," he said with a shrug about an hour before a recent game. "All I ever asked for is to be given a chance to play."

This spring, he got that opportunity from new O's manager Davey Johnson, an example of the way the sport affords men even third chances. A World Series ring and a string of 90-plus-win seasons with the New York Mets in the 1980s was not enough to insulate Johnson from the politics of baseball, which are as ruthless as anything that happens on Capitol Hill. At the first sign of trouble on the Mets, Johnson was subjected to rumors about carousing (shades of John Tower) and then unceremoniously fired early in the season. When he finally got another job, it was tendered by the Owner from Hell, Cincinnati's Marge Schott. All you need to know about her is that she told Johnson that five coaches was too many, so when Johnson wanted to hire a coach named John Stearns, he had to put a warm-up jersey on Stearns without a number or name. He figured Schott wouldn't know one coach or ballplayer from another. He was right about that and got fired anyway after winning his division.

Johnson got his third chance courtesy of O's owner Peter Angelos, and when he came to Baltimore this spring, he brought Stearns with him to coach first base. I remember Stearns from my college days at the University of Colorado. He was a star football and baseball player there, but I never knew he also could play basketball until one day I was assigned to guard him in a pickup game in the fieldhouse and watched as he nailed 25-footers at will.

"You should play on the varsity baseketball team," I told him.

"You want me to flunk out?" he growled.

If being pugnacious helped Stearns (nicknamed "Bad Dude") keep a game face on, it didn't always endear him to others. He found this out the hard way after his 11-year playing career as a catcher was cut short by an injury to his throwing arm. The fiery player who did not fraternize or engage in small talk found himself

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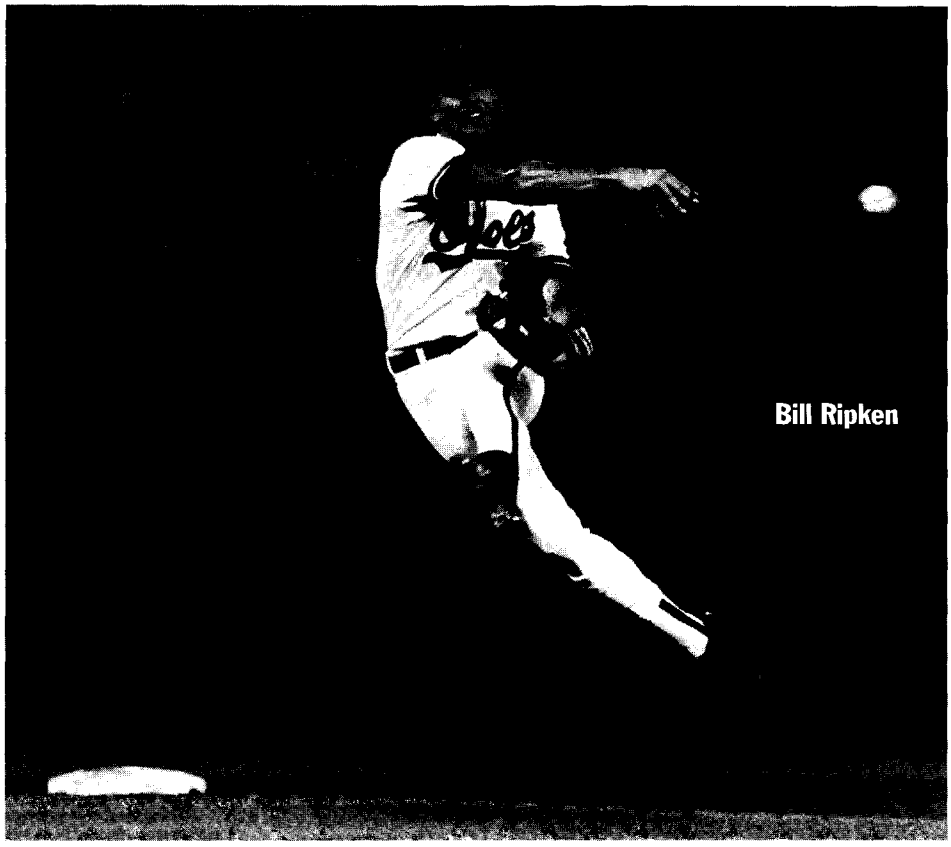

Bill Ripken

AP

forced to rely on the good will of his sport's fraternity if he wanted to stay in the game. "I hadn't made a lot of friends in baseball," he told me while sitting in front of his locker. "My makeup was that I didn't want to befriend opponents."

With much effort, Stearns landed a series of player-development positions with various organizations, the last as manager of the Toronto Blue Jays' Double-A team in Knoxville for two years. He was abruptly let go in 1992. In his early forties and out of baseball for the first time since he left school, Stearns found himself broadcasting games on ESPN. He realizes now that this time away may be serving him well as he pursues his goal of being a big-league manager someday. "It wasn't an easy transition for me to be a coach. There's a lot of politics in the coaching ranks. It's a tough business," he said. "I needed someone to give me another chance, and Davey did."

Sometimes a comeback is almost mundane: In March, Bill Ripken, looking around the Orioles training camp in Florida, sort of figured out that he was back on a major league team, but he wanted to confirm it: "At the end of spring training, I went into Davey's office and said, 'I am here, right?' and he said, 'Yeah.' That was it."

Other times, second chances can be filled with all the drama the sport has to offer. The great example in modern baseball is probably Kirk Gibson's 9th-inning homer off Dennis Eckersley to win the first game of the 1988 World Series. Both men were great second-chance stories. Eckersley was a starter in Boston who battled booze, a sore arm, and a divorce when he went to the Oakland A's. There, manager Tony LaRussa made a relief pitcher out of him, and he went on to become perhaps the greatest in history. Gibson was hurt, playing on one leg, his glory years of playing all-out every game in Detroit having taken their toll. That night, he limped to the plate with two outs and a man on, the Dodger faithful wondering how Gibson would even run to first if he hit the ball. Turns out, he only had to stroll around the bases.

Al Rosen said that the greatest thrill in the world was to end the game with a home run so you can watch everybody else walk off the field "while you're running the bases on air." Most of us don't get to run the bases on air in front of 20 million people the way Kirk Gibson did, but most of us have moments of our own, and plenty of second chances, too.

Mine came five years ago when I was invited to come and watch—and maybe fill in for an inning or two on—an over-30 hardball team called the Alexandria Athletics. My wife acquiesced, but with one proviso. "It's your son's 9th birthday," she said. "If you are going to try and play baseball again, you're taking him with you."

I showed up at a local high school field in jeans and with my old glove. "Where do you play?" the manager asked. Anywhere, I said. "Good," he responded. "We've only got eight. Take left field." I was the one walking on air now, and between innings, my son came down the foul line and warmed me up.

I came up to bat for the first time in 19 years in the bottom of the second. Pete Rose once said he'd "walk through hell in a gasoline suit to keep playing baseball," but my state of mind was more akin to

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what James Thurber was getting at when he observed that most American males put themselves to sleep by striking out the batting order of the New York Yankees. I had stopped playing baseball when I was 16. In the process, I had inadvertently broken a connection I'd had with my father—and one he'd had with his father. I had also quit the game before I was ready. This night, with my son watching instead of my dad, I looked for a fastball away and got it. The ball went over the centerfielder's head, and kept going. This was more than recapturing glory. I had never hit homers as a kid.

When the inning was over, I told my son it felt like a dream. "How do you think I feel?" he answered. "On my 9th birthday, my dad hits a homer—and I get to see it. I want somebody to pinch me to make sure *I'm* not dreaming."

It's only by being parents that we really understand life's first truth—that we are someone else's children. For many of us, it's baseball that helps bring us full circle. We set the ball on a makeshift tee and ask a 4-year-old to swing the bat through the ball, holding their hands just so, the way we were taught when we were little. In the backyard, we consent to show a young pitcher how to throw a curve, but caution them not to throw it too often or when they are too young.

A few years ago, a Long Island father named Steve Sigler went to his son's Little League practice where he was pressed into service warming up a young pitcher. An unexpected thrill came over him as he gripped a hardball in his hands for the first time since his college baseball career ended 15 years before. Why, he wondered, do I have to play softball in a beer league? So he started the Men's Senior Baseball League, for men over the age of 30, originally made up of the fathers of the boys on his kid's team. Today there are 280 leagues playing under that name with teams as far away as the Netherlands and the Virgin Islands, including the Alexandria A's. Divisions have been added for men in their twenties and men in their forties. All told, Sigler's notion has given 50,000 men a second chance at baseball.

They don't get to do what Ray Kinsella did in the movie *Field of Dreams*, making up for lost time by playing catch with a long-dead father in a magical Iowa cornfield. But then again, maybe they do. The day I went up to Baltimore to talk to Bill Ripken and John Stearns, I brought my son, now 15. After I was done with my interviews I joined him in the stands and we watched the game. I couldn't help noticing that when Paul Molitor of the opposing Milwaukee Brewers took his position at first base, Stearns, the one-time hard-ass, kibitzed with him.

In the bottom of the ninth with the score tied, Orioles outfielder Brady Anderson came up. My son said, "He's going to hit a homer to win it." That's exactly what happened, and when Anderson circled the bases, the first one to greet him with a hug at home plate was John Stearns. ♦

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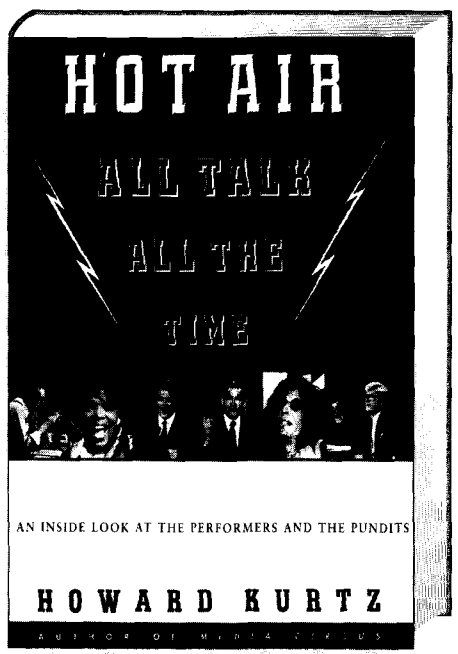

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TIMES BOOKS

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President Clinton will make a cameo appearance in a TV movie about a terminally ill child who wants to meet the president. In "A Child's Wish," star John Ritter loses his job as a result of spending too much time caring for his sick daughter. Clinton said the movie underscores the importance of the Family and Medical Leave Act. —*News item, April 11, 1996*

Parody

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON DC

MEMO TO THE PRESIDENT
FROM OFFICE OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS
RE: UPCOMING MOVIE ROLES

As you know, your recent cameo on "A Child's Wish" was a spectacular success. The TV critic for the Tri-County Regional Media Services Syndicate (Iowa) put it best: the president's performance, he raved, was "... remarkabl[y]..." good. With one stroke we were able to 1) highlight your sponsorship of the Family and Medical Leave Act; 2) advance your comprehensive agenda for working families; and 3) meet John Ritter.

Per your request, we have arranged for other cameos as a proactive component of our strategy throughout 1996.

* **A Line Item for Laura:** Made-for-TV, starring Meredith Baxter-Birney. Terminally ill mom has dying wish: that congressional Republicans restore funding for neighborhood bike path her terminally ill son uses for exercise.
POTUS Scene: President visits her grave in closing moments of film and lays a Continuing Resolution at her headstone, says: "This is the best we can do for you now, Laura, but someday ...." Music swells.

* **Under Siege IV: One Bullet at a Time:** Theatrical release, starring Steven Seagal as terminally ill munitions expert who refuses to use assault weapons banned under Brady bill. Uses small hand-held thermonuclear devices instead.
POTUS Scene: As President awards the munitions expert the Medal of Freedom, terrorists disrupt ceremony. Seagal kills them, even though he must reload after each shot. President watches approvingly.

* **Gomer's Return:** Made-for-TV. Reunites original cast of "Gomer Pyle, USMC." Though dishonorably discharged in the Reagan years for "disruptive behavior," Gomer rejoins Marine Corps under the President's "don't ask, don't tell" policy.
POTUS Scene: President makes brief visit to Gomer and Sergeant Carter in the off-base apartment they share.

* **Kiss It, Kiss It:** Erotic thriller. Sharon Stone plays low-level bureaucrat in administration of idealistic southern governor (Charles Grodin). The slut lures him to hotel room, where he courageously resists her seduction. She goes public with a totally unbelievable tale of "sexual harassment."
POTUS Scene: Following Stone's confession and suicide, President greets governor and advises all public servants on the need for comprehensive personal liability insurance.

Further films are awaiting your script review. FYI: Oppo research tells us Sen. Dole plans a cameo in **Life Isn't Fair,** starring Scott Baio as father of terminally ill boy. Sen. Dole's efforts to balance the budget lower interest rates by 200 basis points, allowing Baio to refinance his mortgage and pay for special treatments. The kid dies anyway.

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